1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



## Death

### Funeral Rites

The rites which accompanied burial were probably the last of the ancient Easter Island customs to yield to missionary influence. As late as 1880 the natives still felt reluctant to bury their dead in the Catholic cemetery and used to steal the bodies at night and carry them to the ahus (funeral terraces) of their ancestors. I saw two isolated graves at the bay of Hangoteo in which, the natives explained, were buried two Christians whom relatives had tried to put in their lineage ahu, but who had been again inhumed according to the Catholic ceremonial. The persistency of ancient funeral customs has helped to preserve in the memories of Easter Islanders more details concerning death rituals than of any other phase of the old culture. An insight into native practices may be had from a study of the 200 to 250 ahus scattered throughout the island (p. 283). Although the ahus were probably sanctuaries of the various social units, their use as sepulchers has entirely obliterated any other significance and to the present natives they are the equivalent of our cemeteries.

Soon after death the body was "wrapped in a straw mat [tapa or rush mat] longer than the body and tied with *purau* string. The whole bundle was put in front of the house, on the shore. These bodies, enveloped in mats, were placed on a heap of stones or on a kind of wooden structure, the head being turned toward the sea" (81, vol. 38, p. 74). Sometimes the corpse was wrapped in tapa and "lowered into the cleft of a rock or some other inaccessible place" (171, p. 174). We discovered many skeletons concealed in caves or fissures in the rock along the north coast, thus attesting to the accuracy of this statement. After exposure near the house the corpse was carried on staves to the ahu where it was placed on an oblong frame. According to Routledge (194, p. 170),

> . . . this [frame] consisted of four corner uprights set up in the ground, the upper extremities of which were Y-shaped, two transverse bars rested in the bifurcated ends, one at the head, the other at the foot, and on these transverse bars were placed the extremities of the bundle which wrapped the corpse. . . . At times, instead of four supports, two stones were used with a hole in each, into which a Y-shaped stick was placed.

This last type of platform must have been exceptional, for stone cylinders which might have served such a purpose are found only at the ahu Hangahahave. (See p. 302.)

It is not known how long the dead were exposed. Probably when they were entirely decomposed the remainder of the bodies was removed to a vault of the ahu. Routledge's statement that fishhooks, chisels, and other objects were sometimes included with the dead seems very doubtful as there is no surviving tradition of any such practice and no implements have been discovered in the ahus.

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



764 Most of the tombs we opened contained only one skeleton but collective burial was sometimes practiced. In a long narrow vault of a rectangular ahu under the hill of Vai-tara-kai-ua we procured the bones of several individuals. Between La Pérouse and Ovahe is an ahu with vaults perpendicular to the sea which are filled with an incredible number of bones. Geiseler (87, p. 30) writes: "A burial is chosen by a family and kept by it for a long time. In order to make more room when other people die, all the bones of the dead are removed with the exception of the skulls." Thomson (215, p. 503) found in a vault of ahu Hanahakou (?), between Ahu-te-peu and ahu Ohau, many skulls, "and the surroundings excluded the idea of any other portions of the bodies having been interred with them." I found no vaults reserved exclusively for skulls.

Often the remains of the dead were scattered on or near the ahu. This custom explains the observation of Cook (53, vol. 1, p. 294): "I, as well as some others, saw a human skeleton lying in one of these platforms, just covered with stones." La Pérouse (130, vol. 1, p. 79) "met with several pyramids of stone arranged nearly like balls in a park of artillery, and perceived some human bones in the neighborhood of the pyramids and statues, of which the latter had always their backs directed toward the sea." The decay of many ahus, even at the time of Captain Cook, might explain the presence of bones on the surface.

764 784 688 The removal of the dead to the ahu probably ended the mourning period. While the body was exposed near the ahu, the surrounding region was under tapu; fishing was prohibited along the near-by shore and cooking was restricted. In principle, fire could not be lighted in the area under the interdiction, and smoke which was especially feared had to be hidden or smothered with grass. The symbol of the tapu was a pile of stones (*pipi hereko*) with a bleached stone on the top (p. 327). The penalty for breaking the tapu was death inflicted with a club. The spot marked by the tapu could not be approached in the daylight (?). (See 194, p. 232.)

764 262 The funeral for a man was always the occasion for big banquets, concerning which I collected confusing evidence.

An earth oven called *umu ki te takapu o koro* (for the funeral of the father) was prepared by a brother or cousin of the deceased in behalf of the eldest son of the dead. Fowls were given to the brothers or cousins of the dead and were tied together in groups of ten before the ahu. On the day of death the eldest son and the family of the deceased made an earth oven. The widow also made a special earth oven with the help of her parents. The food was presented to the eldest son, who gave it to his father's brother or sister. The son did not eat anything and he delivered his own earth oven to his mother or his mother's family. Neither the son nor the daughter was allowed to partake of the first food. But on the same day, the brother of the dead, his father, or his mother, or some other relative prepared a special earth oven for the children of the dead who had not been allowed to eat the first food. The brothers-in-law could also make the earth oven called *takapu*. If there were no parents to make the *takapu*, the sons made an earth oven for themselves. The parents of a dead child could not eat the first *umu*. In Tepano's time the Easter Islanders still buried people in the ahu, but they did not let the bodies rot on the scaffolds.

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



During a funeral the people wept and danced, while they lamented the dead as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| E koro e, ka moemoe koe, tou aringa ena, | O father, you are lying, your face, |
| E koro e, aue taua e, e koro e, e koro kai nui e, | Father, alas for us, father, father who brought us much food, |
| Ika nui e, koreha nui e, koira nui e, | Many fish, many eels, many conger eels, |
| Toa nui e, maika nui e. | Much sugar cane, many bananas. |

The woman wept enumerating all that her husband had done:

| | |
|---|---|
| E koro e, ka moemoe koe, tou aringa ena, | O father, you are lying, your face, |
| Aue taua e, e koro e, e koro kai nui e, | Alas for us, father, O father who brought much food, |
| Ika nui e, uhi nui e, kumara nui e, | Many fish, many yams, many sweet potatoes, |
| Koreha nui e, toa nui e, maika nui e, | Many eels, much sugar cane, many bananas, |
| E koro tae noinoi ki hare era e, | O father who did not go begging to the houses of others. |
| Aue koro e, i ngaroro ai e. | He is lost. |
| E koro ika nui, o hau tangitangi e. | O father, great fisherman, your taut line sung. |
| Aue taua e. | Alas for us two. |

The wife wept each time she saw an article of food that reminded her of her husband. At a woman's funeral the men wept, but did not sing. They merely said:

| | |
|---|---|
| Aue hua e takatore nui e, heke nui e, tuamingo nui e. | O lady, you brought always many shells, many octopus, many *tuamingo* [species of fish]. |

The family contributed to the heavy funeral expenses. Relatives paid singers who improvised songs called *ate atua* (praising the dead). The singers sat in two rows with the women in front and the men behind. Only one man danced on the resounding board, a wooden slab placed over a hole in the ground.

Today when a native dies the catechist observes the Catholic rites. Everyone recites the prayers for the death and sings religious hymns. The only survival of the old ceremonial is a banquet held by the natives on the death day. Sometimes they even dance on this occasion. Such practices were severely condemned by Father Estella, who succeeded in shifting the mortuary feast to the day after death. The natives promised him that they would make no *umu* for great crowds, only small ones for the nearest relatives. The occasion of the priest's intervention was a feast celebrated after news of an Easter Islander's death in Chile had reached the island. The priest complained that the natives were excited by the banquet and could not refrain from speaking loudly and dancing the *upaupa*.

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



764 177 Twenty years ago Routledge (194, p. 149) assisted in the interment of Angata, Pakomio's mother, who was put into a coffin and lowered into a grave in the Catholic cemetery. Curiously enough her prie-dieu was buried with her. Three English cheers added the only odd touch to the whole ceremony which was performed according to strictest Catholic custom. On the same day, a great feast of pigs was held, probably as a funeral banquet.

765 From the English Company I obtained an old photograph showing a group of girls, dressed in white, singing for the dead. My informant, Victoria Rapahango, told me later that the picture was taken at a feast held six months after the death of one of her children. The long period between the death and the feast suggests a survival of some old custom.

769 787 775 Offerings of food were made for the dead, but we do not know whether this was a general custom for all dead or only for those who asked for food through the medium of dreams or in the form of ghosts. Our only source of information is the following passage in a letter of Father Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 120):

> As to the souls of the bad men, they stay near the corpses enduring hunger and thirst in proportion to their wickedness. From there they sometimes go to beg food from their relatives and friends who must give it if they wish to be rid of the importunity of the dead. I had many opportunities to fight against this superstition, especially among women who had been converted. Very often, as a consequence of a nightmare, they were induced to put food on the grave of a relative they believed they had seen in a dream.

765 262 The mourning of relatives lasts from one to two years (87, p. 30) or even three years, according to Routledge (194, p. 171). For only sons the mourning might have continued for three or four years. Relatives—we do not know exactly who—had to keep food tapus and were not allowed to eat sweet potatoes (87, p. 30). When the mourning was over a great feast was celebrated and the "pappa was finished" (194, p. 171).

### Comparison with other Polynesian Funeral Rites

171 764 The wooden platforms on which the corpses were exposed resemble the Mangarevan biers described and figured by Beechey (15, vol. 1, p. 170). They are also similar to the Marquesan biers resting on four posts (142, p. 57). The stone platforms behind some Easter Island ahus have their equivalents in the Marquesas. On Hivaoa the platform for the dead was made of stream boulders, well fitted together and encasing rough stones, rubble, and earth (104, p. 117).

### SUICIDE

762 152 Suicide is reported to have been very frequent before Christianity was introduced. For the "slightest provocation" natives jumped from a cliff (190, p. 464). Very likely the psychological background for these suicides was the same as in other parts of Polynesia, especially Mangareva, where it seems to

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



a mountain called Tuu which may have some connection with the general name of the western groups.

Dual division was correlated with certain aspects of the religious ceremonies. For instance the servants (*hopu*) who stayed on the island of Motu-nui awaiting the first eggs of the tern (*manu-tara*) were grouped according to the region from which they came (p. 335). The island Motu-nui was divided into two sections by a line passing through the center of a cave where the contestants lived and, according to Routledge (194, p. 261), " . . . also through another cave nearer the edge of the islet; in this latter there was at one time a statue about two feet high and known as Tita-hanga-o-te-henua, or the Boundary of the Land." The dual division of the groups was also observed at the stone village of Orongo where, to quote Routledge (194, p. 260), " . . . the group of houses at the end among the cave rocks was taboo during the festival, for they were inhabited by the rongo-rongo men, the western half being apportioned to the experts from Hotu-iti, the eastern to those from Ko Tuu." This dualism can be interpreted in the light of conditions prevailing on other islands. Hotu-iti and Tuu were probably two antagonistic confederations of tribes fighting for hegemony of the entire island.

The eastern headland, Poike, was not included in any district. That region is entirely barren and only three ahus were built on its edges—one at the foot of Mount Teatea, another on the eastern slope of Mount Puakatiki, and another facing the island Marotiri. The burial places were erected by Ureohei and Tupa-hotu people. The southwestern point of the island with its volcano, Rano-kao, was also outside of the districts, though some Marama, Haumoana, and Miru families lived near the present Mataveri and by the Ahu-rikiriki on the southern slope of the volcano.

The Miru were the most widely distributed of the *mata*, and families or representatives of the Miru lived in the districts of Marama and Haumoana, near the village of Hanga-roa and the bay of Hanga-piko, and on the slopes of Rano-kao near Mataveri. The Hamea and Raa groups are always mentioned together and are represented as being closely associated with the Miru in whose district they lived. They had no territory of their own. The Marama occupied a long strip of land from the west coast to the south coast. They are frequently mentioned with the names of certain important places where they were numerous. They are spoken of as the Marama of Tahai, the Marama of Vaihu, the Marama of Hanga-roa. The district given by Hotu-matua to his son Marama does not coincide exactly with the distribution of the Marama tribe. It includes the territory of the Ngaure, the Ngatimo, and a part of the Haumoana, but it does not extend to the west coast through the interior of the land. The Haumoana, like the Marama, extended from the southern coast to the western coast. Haumoana people are mentioned east of their boundary, settled in the district of the Ngatimo. The Ngatimo group was concentrated in a very short section of the south coast where fishing was unfavorable. However, Ngatimo families occupied the shore from Vinapu to Vaihu. The Ngaure were natives of Akahanga cove, but their real location overlapped their district, and some of them lived to the east of their land. The Tupa-hotu, Ureohei (Hitiuira), and Koro-

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



643 quite possible that the same tapu applied to the other members of the Miru
262 tribe (194, p. 242). The *mahore, kotea, pahika, teteme,* and *kahi* (tuna) were
784 the only fish allowed the king. The tapu on tuna fishing during the winter months (p. 173) did not apply to the king and a few noblemen. During the tapu period expert fishermen went to catch tuna in the king's boat which was called *vaka-vaero* and was decorated with cock feathers. All fish caught from the *vaka-vaero* were presented to the king, who kept them for his own use or, more often, distributed them among the important old men (*tangata-honui*). The first *kahi* taken after the lifting of the tapu in summer were taken to the king, who tasted a bit and gave the rest to the *tangata-honui.* The food for the king was strictly tapu and only the *haka-paapa* could touch it.

### DRESS

643 The dress of the king was similar to that of any wealthy man. He wore
291 a beautiful tapa cloak stained yellow (*nua*) with turmeric and "feather hats
386 of various descriptions." From his neck, both back and front, hung six
301 wooden balls (*tahonga*) and six small wooden crescents (*rei-miro*) with
826 small shell tassels (*rei-pipipipi*) dangling from them. The only distinguishing physical characteristic of the sons of kings was an alleged growth of down under the eyes.

### RESIDENCE

644 Nga-ara, the last king who died with full rank, had his headquarters at
764 Anakena, which is the most pleasant part of the island. This was the beach chosen by the discoverers of the island for their king, Hotu-matua. There
533 Hotu-matua landed and died. From that time on the bones of the kings and of the members of the Honga lineage were buried in the ahus which still surround the cove. Near them are to be seen the foundations of a school of chanters, in front of which people gathered to hear the recitations and chants. Modern natives are fond of this cove where hills dominate a long beach which slopes gently to the sea and where swimming is pleasant (pl. 1, *B*).

173 According to a tradition which I was unable to check, each new king went
644 to live at Ahu-a-kapu, near Tahai on the west coast. Later, when he had yielded his authority to his son, he went to ahu Tahai and then to Anakena where he spent his last years. Nga-ara was the only king who died in Tahai, and his remains were buried in the large ahu there. The young princes were raised in a village called Papa-o-pea, near ahu Ohau, not far from Ahu-te-peu. The literature on Easter Island contains only one allusion to the kings' changes of residence. However, Routledge (194, p. 279) has recorded a tradition in which Hotu-matua quarreled with his eldest son, Tuu-ma-heke, to whom he ceded his position and then retired to the top of the Rano-kao, where he lived on the southern side of the crater, opposite Orongo. Traditions

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



501 knob is bulkier than those of other islands and lacks the beaked shape which
171 characterizes both the Marquesan and Mangarevan paddles. On one face of Tuamotuan paddles is a median flange which prolongs the handle and stops near the distal end, also provided with a knob. The other surface has a ridge continuous to the tip. Some Hawaiian paddles (109, p. 17) have a small rib at the tip. Cook Islands paddles are characterized by a raised flange.

## CORDAGE

283 Cords (*hau*) were made of *hau* (*Triumfetta semitriloba*) or paper mul-
[824] berry bast. The bark was stripped off the tree, the outer surface scraped away, and the bast allowed to dry. The fibers were rolled on the bare thigh into strands which were twisted together. The number of plies in ropes varied according to the size and strength required. Now only fine cords are made, principally for trade. Geiseler (87, p. 49) says that bulrush bast was used for making ropes, but he is certainly mistaken, for bulrush fibers are not strong enough for cords and natives never mentioned the bulrush among the cordage material. A microscopic analysis by Dr. Roland W. Brown of the seine net (*kupenga maito*) in the National Museum in Washington showed that the twine was made of paper mulberry fibers. Thomson (215, p. 460) speaks of the *hau* bark and of a native hemp. No hemp grows on the island
[826] and it is impossible to know to what plant Thomson alludes. Braided human hair (*hiri*) was very popular on Easter Island for cords. Even in Tahiti the Easter Islanders made such braids (56, p. 321).

## MATS

285 Mats were termed *moenga* (thing-to-sleep-on); thus the name defines the
[764] principal use. Mats were also worn by women instead of tapa cloaks. Dead people were wrapped in mats, and many mat fragments were found in the tombs. Rolled into big bundles, mats formed swimming floats (*pora*). Not a single mat is to be had nowadays, but natives remember the general principle of technique, which is illustrated in two reed mats collected by Geiseler and stored in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (pl. 2, *C*).

The reeds (*Scirpus riparius*) come from the lakes of Rano-aroi and Rano-kao. They were split open with the thumb nail and allowed to dry for a few days before the soft substance was scraped out with the nails. The strips were then sewn together with doubled lengths of *hau* string spaced at intervals along the length of the strips. For technique see figure 20.

The mat shown in plate 2, *C*, is 159 cm. long by 107 cm. wide. It has 16 weft lines which are spaced about 10 cm. apart or nearly 4 inches. Another mat in the Berlin Museum (VI.4971) is 195 cm. by 187 cm. An informant writes that the ends of the strips were fastened by two strings that were knotted around each strip, but this technique does not appear in the mat figured in plate 2, *C*.

## BASKETS

Food that natives traded to the Cook expedition was presented in large mat bags of very neat workmanship (83, vol. 1, p. 590). A woman depicted

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



near the quarry. The final polishing was done with abrasive volcanic stones called *punga*. Though the amount of work involved was probably less than is generally believed, the two weeks allowed by Routledge for the completion of a statue seems to me too short a time.

Routledge (194, p. 181) suggests that it was never intended to remove many of the statues carved in the quarry. One statue still adhering to the rock is 20 meters long, a size that precludes the possibility of transport. Though the statue is apparently finished, there is no indication of any work to detach it from the ledge of tuff. Another image in the interior of the crater rests on its side with the back overhanging the cliff. It is unlikely that it would have occupied such a position if it was intended to be lowered down. There is further evidence that many of these images were merely rock carvings, "little more than embossed carvings on the face of the rock without surrounding alley-ways" (194, p. 181). Near Anakena we discovered a small stone image on a ledge of basalt. This occupied the same position as the large Rano-raraku images and was probably just a rock carving.

### Statues on the Ahus

There are two classes of Easter Island statues—those which still stand in the crater, at the foot of Rano-raraku, or on the plains, and those which once surmounted the ahus or burial places. Though they are made of the same stone and are of the same general style, there are differences which are worth stressing.

The large ahus (p. 284) were all surmounted by *moai* or busts carved from the soft volcanic tuff of Rano-raraku crater. All these have been pulled down with the exception of the base of a statue on the right wing of ahu Tonga-riki. The number of statues which were erected on the ahu depended on its importance and perhaps on other circumstances which we will never know. Ahu Tonga-riki had 15 statues; ahu Akahanga, 13 statues; ahu Vinapu, 6; and Hanga-o-honu, 5 or perhaps 6. Five statues was the average for ahus of medium size. Te-pito-te-kura, near La Pérouse Bay, and a few others had only one statue. The images rested on large square slabs which still stand on the higher platforms of most of the ahus. The main characteristics of the statues may be defined as follows:

The long head is about three sevenths of the total height of the statue (134, p. 182). The top of the head is flat, the forehead narrow. The back of the head is vertical and, with the straight line of the ears, gives to the head a flattened and square appearance. The eyebrows are well marked and overlap elliptic cavities which represent the sockets of the eyes (pl. 6, *A*). The nose is long, the tip slightly upturned and the nostrils expanded. The thin lips of the mouth are pursed, giving the image a scornful expression. The chin has a sharp edge. On both sides the head is framed by conventionalized representations of the ear with elongated lobes. The nipples are sometimes so strongly delineated by the converging surface that the bust has a feminine appearance. When the

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



532 statues on an ahu. These crowns seem to me an attempt to embellish the images and to add an amusing naturalistic touch.

### PILLARS ON AHUS

532 764 Near several ahus on the south coast of the island are cylinders made of red tuff. These proved to be hats with the exception of two behind an ahu near Hanga-paukura. These seem to have been supports for a wooden frame on which corpses were exposed. According to Palmer (171, p. 179), some of the cylinders had "flat tops and were cut away on each side as though to make a step or shelf." Palmer's brief description exactly fits a big cylinder behind ahu Hanga-hahave (fig. 55, *c*) except that the upper surface has also been carved into flat compartments. The average height of the pillars is 6 feet.

Behind the ahu Vinapu, Palmer saw a pillar which has disappeared; I did not see it and nobody has mentioned it in later times. He writes (171, p. 179):

FIGURE 55.—Stonework: *a*, image from door of stone house at Orongo; *b*, human face pecked roughly on boulder, 116 mm. high, 105 mm. wide (Trocadero Mus.); *c*, red tuff cylinder behind ahu Hanga-hahave, probably a support for wooden frame for exposing the dead.

Again, in a direct line from this, landwards, at about 80 or 100 yards from the platform is one of the low, slanting, saddle-topped pillars used for cremation (burnt sacrifice). It is also of red tuff, but was not more than 4.5 or 5 feet high. The finest I saw was at Winipoo of which I append a description. In a paved area, similar to that of the last described pillar, is a pillar of red tuff 3.5 feet squared and 8.5 or 8.75 feet high. The top projects forwards, and ends in two horns, with a deep saddle-shaped notch between them; each horn has a face traced on it, in low relief—face surmounted with a crown (*hau*), but that to the northwest had crumbled away (from the action of fire). The projecting part is terminated at the breast, and lower down a round projecting navel is marked. Just above, where the pillars join the area, the fingers are sculptured, in low relief, flat, and clasping the hips as in the images.

We were told that *keaba* (victims) were burnt here, and at the foot of one of these pillars at Winipoo we found many burnt bones. The pillars were in number at least one for every image-platform. [See also sketch, 168, p. 284; neither description nor sketch suggests any known monument.]

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



Palmer's interpretation of the use of the cylinders rests on his translation of the word *ika* which may mean either victim or corpse. In saying that the pillars were intended for the *ika* the natives may have meant that the stones were supports for the platform on which the dead were laid, or that they had some connection with funerals. Thomson (215, pp. 470-472) writes in regard to these pillars:

> In the rear of some of the best preserved platforms are stones said to have been erected for sacrificial purposes. These altars consist of a single shaft, generally of vesicular lava, but in some cases cut from the material of which the images and crowns were made. They range in height from 5 to 10 feet, squared to 3.5 or 4 feet on each face, and stand in the center of a terrace paved with smooth boulders. The sides and plinth were covered with figures sculptured in low relief, but are now too much weather-worn to be traced. These altars are said to have been designed and used for human sacrifices, but of this a reasonable doubt may be expressed.
>
> The form is inconveniently adapted to the purpose and the stones differ in all respects from those used for the same purpose in the other islands. Evidence of fire on top of the stones was plain enough, but no charred bones were found except those of recent date belonging to sheep and cattle.

I do not remember having seen traces of fire on the top of the cylinders. Dr. Lavachery, who is at present writing on the archaeology of Easter Island, will certainly present more data about these enigmatic cylinders.

## THE HAT QUARRY

The quarry from which material for hats was derived is located in a small crater on the side of the volcanic cone of Punapau behind Hanga-roa. There red vesicular tuff, extremely light and easily worked, has been extensively exploited. In the bottom of the crater, a wall cropping out of the grass is the only sign of an ancient quarry.

Twenty-three hats are strewn about on the outside of the crater and there are a few inside. The quarry is probably in the same state as it was in 1777 when visited by members of Cook's reconnoitering party (53, vol. 1, p. 285). The hats near the quarry are cylindrical but lack the superior knot and boss of the ahu hats and have no depression to fit on the head. As noticed by the first visitors, the hats in the quarry are larger than those on the rest of the island. The largest hat is about 2.60 meters high and 3 meters wide. The ground under one of these hats has been excavated so that a cave is formed where several persons may crouch. All the unfinished stone headdresses are covered with meaningless designs which resemble natural grooves and which are identical to the designs on the stage of ahu Hanga-te-tenga. Some cylinders near the ahus of the south coast are decorated with similar depressions and hollows. These curious motifs were described to Jaussen (115, p. 245) as the proprietary marks (*rona*) of the owners.

2:Fardon A-5 (1956) 1957
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



tablets are guarded by "devils" that will, in extreme cases, kill a man who stumbles upon such a cave and steals one of the tablets.

I had no time nor opportunity to delve into any beliefs that might exist regarding what happens to a person after death, but I suspect that here the church has made deep inroads, for the dead are now given the last rites of the church and then buried in a Catholic cemetery.

Immediately upon the death of an individual a certain amount of grief will be shown by the immediate kin, but this appears to be more the result of natural shock than of any culturally determined mourning pattern. Between the time of death and the holding of last rites, the body is kept on view in the victim's house, after which it is carried in its coffin to the church where the last rites are administered by the island's priest. As the body is carried from the church to the cemetery the cortege breaks into song. Some of these are of the slow, religious type, but many have an almost gay lilt. During and after the church services there is no overt expression of mourning on the part of the nearest kin, but as the casket is lowered into the ground a near-hysteria of grief breaks out among the closest relatives of the deceased and is explained by my informants on the basis that this is the final separation from a beloved one.

Since, as appears to be the case, the strongest impact of death comes with the physical parting of the dead from the living, one cannot help but wonder if this final show of extreme mourning is a direct result of the more abrupt practices of Christian religion rather than an Easter Island trait of long standing. It was not, after all, many years ago that burial exposure was practiced: by this method, at least the fleshy parts of the body disappear slowly over a length of time — it is only after the bones are left that final burial takes place in a tomb, usually a surface stone structure or a vault within the platform of an *ahu*. The change from a long drawn out physical relationship with the body to a sudden disappearance of a body in a pit, and the change from customary surface burial to sub-surface interment must have required considerable psychological adjustment. Today's overt manifestation of extreme grief as the body is lowered into the ground may, therefore, indicate that this adjustment to a new burial practice is not complete. On the other hand it may, perhaps, reflect a mourning pattern formerly used when the fleshless bones were given their final resting place.

During the evening of the day of burial the family of the deceased gives a large *umu* feast, often including music and dancing, for all visitors. At this time there are certain taboos with regard to the eating of the *umu* food by the immediate family. Thus, if a father dies neither his brothers and sisters, his children, nor his wife may partake of the food thus prepared. If a child has died neither

2:Ferdon A-5 (1956) 1957
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



ties from the island's administrators that its incidence in the past few years is said to have dropped noticeably.

It is in the matter of death and burial ritual that the church has shown a strong influence amounting to almost complete substitution of foreign for indigenous custom. However, the ancient feast formerly held on the day of death continues to be celebrated, along with the enforcement of certain eating taboos on the members of the deceased's family. The only influence the church has had on this celebration is to change its time to the day of burial. Whereas most of the natives are now seemingly content to have their deceased relatives go through the church ritual and be buried in the Catholic cemetery, I gathered a number of contemporary accounts of elderly men who, becoming ill, have gone to a secret cave to die. During our visit one old man became sick and disappeared from the village for almost two weeks. Since he worked for the sheep ranch, the administration attempted to find out where he had gone and what had happened to him. Considerable questioning brought forth the same answer, that the old man believed he was about to die and had probably gone to his secret cave.[8] In time he returned, well and healthy, but remained completely vague as to where he had been during his absence. As for the burial of the dead in ancient *ahus*, a secretly practiced custom in 1880,[9] I could learn nothing and, from all indications, this practice has ceased.

Beside the government's influence in lowering the incidence of divorce, it has been responsible in no small degree for a certain amount of change in the early sector of the life cycle. Thus, with the presence of a Naval-controlled hospital, doctor, and midwife, it must be presumed that much of the ancient practice surrounding the delivery of a baby, including the method of tying and severing the umbilical cord, has given way to more modern medical practices. However, it is interesting to note that the early custom of smearing red ocher into the umbilical wound continues up to the present time, along with the ceremonial *umu* given by the father's family to that of the mother, and at which time the mother must still eat the first food.[10] In this connection it should be noted that, while Métraux refers to this *umu* as a feast, my own informants seemed to regard it more as a ceremonial partaking of food.[11] That such may be the case is further strengthened by their description of an immediately following feast for friends and relatives in celebration of the first born child. The latter is not recorded by Métraux and

8 For an unsuccessful attempt at self-interment in a secret cave in 1922, see P. Sebastian Englert, *La Tierra de Hotu Matu'a* (Santiago, 1948), p. 52.

9 Métraux, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

10 *Idem*, pp. 102-108.

11 *Idem*, p. 103.

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
OY2 Easter Island OY2



a paved highway is seen on close examination to be only a bed of lava that in its flow reached the sea.

Other writers, abandoning the hypothesis of the sunken continent, have advanced the view that Easter Island is the center of an archipelago which vanished beneath the waves in a great cataclysm not so many centuries ago. They suggest further that the inhabitants of this supposed string of islands had used Easter Island as a burial place for their dead. According to this surmise, the dream Land of Davis would have been among the many islands that were submerged. But no geological facts can be found to support this theory either. We know, too, that the sanctuaries of Easter Island continued to be used as burial places by the islanders as recently as 70 years ago. Ruins of old villages near the monuments are added evidence that this speck of land was inhabited by the living in former times as it is today, and that it could not have been merely a mausoleum.

However, there remains the baffling fact that such a diminutive island is covered with great statues, some of them 30 or 40 feet high and weighing many tons. Despite my skepticism about the elaborate theories offered in explanation of this miraculous flowering of sculpture, I must confess that I, too, like all previous travelers to the island, was overwhelmed by a feeling of astonishment and awe when I first saw them.

There are few spectacles in the world more impressive than the sight of the statue quarry on the slopes of Ranoraraku. The place is indeed sinister. Imagine a half-crumbled volcano, a black shore line, and huge cliffs which rise up from the sea with smooth green pastures above them. Guarding the quarry, near the volcano, is an army of giant stone figures scattered in the most picturesque disorder. Most of them still stand out boldly. Successive landslides have partially covered others, so that only their heads emerge from the ground, like those of a cursed race buried alive in quicksand. Behind the rows of the erect statues, along the slopes of the volcano, there are 150 figures still in the process of being born. Wherever one looks in the quarry, one sees half-finished sculpture. Ledges of the mountain have been given human shape. Caves have been opened in which statues rest like those on medieval sepulchers in the crypt of some great cathedral. Hardly a single surface has been left uncarved by the artists in their frenzy to exploit the soft tufa of the mountain.

There is something weird in the sight of this deserted workshop with the dead giants all about. At every step, one stumbles over discarded stone hammers. It is as if the quarry had been abandoned on the eve of some holiday, and the workers were expecting on the day after to return and resume their tasks; indeed, in several cases, only a few more blows would have been needed to cut the statues finally free from the rock of the slope.

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
OY2 Easter Island OY2



In my opinion, the seemingly sudden interruption of work in the quarry is the most puzzling problem presented by Easter Island. Such an abrupt stoppage in the sculptors' activity suggests some unforeseen catastrophe, some extraordinary event which upset the entire life of the place. The natives have always had the idea that magic was at the bottom of the trouble whatever it was. There is a legend among them that an old sorceress, forgotten perhaps at a feast, may in her rage have put a curse on the quarry which frightened the workers forever away.

If we reject this fabulous story, we have no explanation of the phenomenon for which there is any basis however slight. Was there possibly some surprise attack by a hostile group on the island in which all the skilled stone carvers were killed? Was there an attack from chance invaders? Were the natives suddenly overwhelmed by a violent epidemic, or did something about their first contact with white men cause them to lay down their tools once for all? We do not know the answer, and I doubt if we shall ever have any light on it.

Whatever the truth about the end of their work, it appears that the last of the stone carvers were under the spell of a megalomaniac dream. Some of the unfinished statues are of enormous size, one of them 60 feet tall. Others are to be found in places out of which it seems impossible that they could ever have been taken. Perhaps their sculptors never intended to move these isolated giants.

There are two types of Easter Island statues—those which still stand in the crater or at the foot of the volcano Ranoraraku, and those which once surmounted the *ahu* or burial places. Though they are of the same stone and of the same general style, there are differences which are worth stressing.

A word must be said about the burial places, which were situated at frequent intervals all along the shore in a line that encircled the island. Most of them were huge stone structures of a peculiar plan developed from the primitive cairn. In these large mausoleums, the crude heap of stones has evolved into a real monument through the use of a retaining wall. This wall, which formed a façade always facing seaward, was built of slabs or regular blocks of stone carefully fitted together into beautiful, smooth surfaces. Behind this is a level platform, and then a gradual slope backward, filled in with coarse rubble. The central portion of the façade juts out, like the apron of a stage, and on the top of this projecting part of the platform stood a row of statues with their faces turned inland. In the long slope leading up to this sacred place the dead were buried.

The figures of the mausoleums or sanctuaries were in the nature of huge busts, the head being disproportionately large in relation to what appears of the body. The back of the head goes straight up from the shoulders and, with the vertical lines of the ears, gives the head a

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
OY2 Easter Island OY2



172 flattened appearance. The eyebrows are well marked and overlap the
532 elliptical cavities which represent the sockets of the eyes. The nose is
long, the tip slightly upturned and the nostrils expanded. The thin
764 lips are pursed with what seems a scornful expression. The arms, slightly flexed, cling to the bust with the hands joined over the abdomen, below which the figure is cut off.

172 The other sculptures on the island—the lonely images on the plain and those that guard the slope of the volcano Ranoraraku—have the
532 same features except that there are no sockets for the eyes. This part of the face, as in some modernistic sculpture, is defined only by the ridge of the eyebrows and by the flat plane of the cheeks below. The lower part of these statues tapers to an enormous peg, which was sunk into the soil.

171 The function of the *ahu* images can be surmised from analogies with
532 the rest of Polynesia. The old Marquesans, close relatives and perhaps
778 forebears of the Easter Islanders, adorned their stone platforms with statues which represented their ancestors. Among all the natives of central and marginal Polynesia, there is the same tendency to give human form to ancestral gods presiding over the sacred places. In the sanctuaries of central Polynesia stood huge slabs that were erected in the same position as the Easter Island statues. These slabs were receptacles for the souls of the ancestral gods, who entered them when they were called by the priests. The Easter Island statues are merely a more realistic development of this idea, favored by the existence of easily carved tufa deposits. Their sculptors elaborated rather than originated a tradition.

172 Everywhere on the island statues are to be found: on top of volcanic
532 hills, along cliffs, and in places which seem almost inaccessible. Their mass must have made their transportation difficult. As a matter of fact, no one has yet explained how some of them were hauled from the quarry and then erected on the platforms on the opposite side of the island.

483 Of course, there are many other instances of people with rudimentary equipment moving objects of great size—for instance, the dolmens and menhirs of Europe. As the statues that the Easter Islanders
[532] erected on their sanctuaries were of the native tufa, they were not exceedingly heavy for their bulk. Their weight ranges from 5 to 8 tons; only one weighs as much as 20 tons. But because the rock from which they were carved is soft, it must have been necessary to take innumerable precautions not to mar or break them in transit. This would have been easy if abundant supplies of wood had been accessible, but, except for a few bushes, the island seems always to have lacked wood. Good material for making ropes was apparently also lacking. The only thing they could have been made from is paper

4: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
OY2 Easter Island OY2



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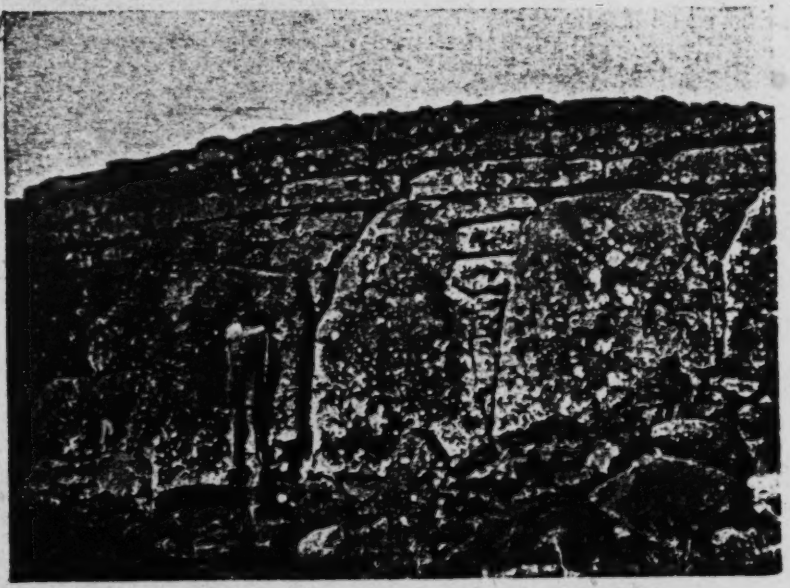
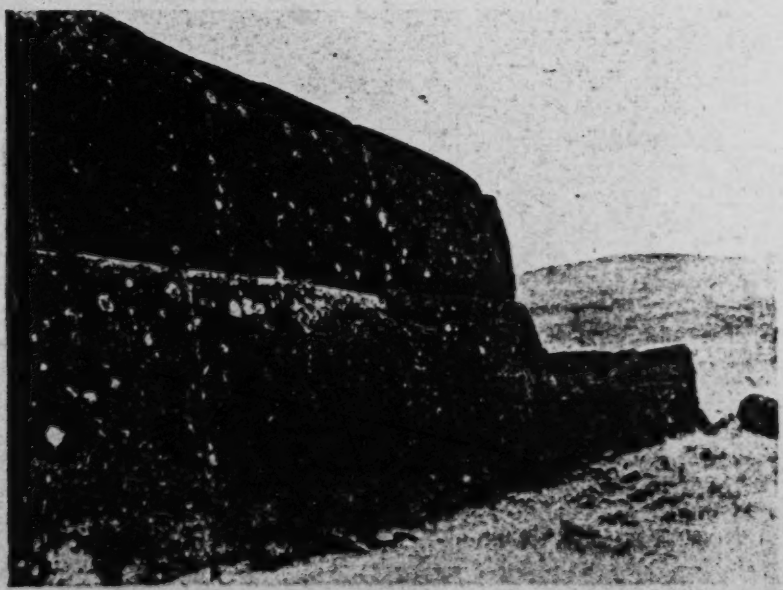


1. SEAWARD FACADE OF AHU (BURIAL PLATFORM) TE-PEU.
Notice in the structure pitted slabs taken from house foundations.



2. THE SEAWARD FACADE OF AHU VINAPU, THE BEST STONE STRUCTURE OF THE ISLAND.

END PLATE 17

6: Anonymous T-5 (1770)1908
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



point of the bay and saw a considerable number of natives posted on the heights, who collected nearer to the middle of the bay as we sailed towards it, so that by the time we let go there must have been more than 800 people, divided in batches, all wearing cloaks of a yellow colour or white. There was not the least appearance of hostility, nor of the implements of war about them; I only saw many demonstrations of rejoicing and much yelling.

At 8 o'clock in the morning we came to an anchor in this bay in 18 fathoms, gravel, coral, small shells, and fine sand. We moored East and West with one anchor to the E. and a kedge to the W. We saw some natives swim off and pass on board of the Commodore; the rest remained on the sea beach, in loose cloaks, shouting with delight and giving other signs, all intended to make us aware of their docility and of their desire to come on board or to see us on shore. At midday the two launches of both ships started (by the Commodore's orders), commissioned to examine and explore the whole circuit of the island, which up to this time we had understood to be a short one. To this end combatant officers, pilots, marines, and the necessary seamen were embarked, with six days' provisions, while the Commodore was making arrangements as to the mode of communicating with the natives, and for giving effect to the orders he bore. We have ascertained that what we took for shrubs of a pyramidal form are in reality statues or images of the idols which the natives worship; they are of stone, and of such a height and corpulence that they look like great thick columns; and as I afterwards ascertained in examining them and taking their dimensions the entire body is of a single block, and the crown or head-dress of another: there is a small concavity on the upper surface of the latter in which they place the bones of their dead, from which it may be inferred that they serve at once for idols and funeral pyres. But it

6: Anonymous T-5 (1770)1908
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



be mentioned that there are others of still greater height in the eastern part of the island. According to the observations of the exploring party there are others widely distributed about the country-side in the interior, which are about 2 or 3 *estados*[1]; and, besides these, innumerable others were met with consisting only of a pyramid or cairn of stones awkwardly piled together, on whose apex was set a round stone washed over with white earth, so as to produce a resemblance to a human skull, from which it may be seen that they have their tombs in these. The sculptured statues are called *Mody* by the natives, who appear to hold them in great veneration, and are displeased when we approach to examine them closely.

They have another effigy or idol clothed and portable which is about four yards [*varas*[2]] in length: it is properly speaking the figure of a Judas, stuffed with straw or dried grass. It has arms and legs, and the head has coarsely figured eyes, nostrils, and mouth: it is adorned with a black fringe of hair made of rushes, which hangs half-way down the back. On certain days they carry this idol to the place where they gather together, and judging by the demonstrations some of them made, we understood it to be the one dedicated to enjoyment, and they name it *Copeca*.

This afternoon the natives who were on board the Commodore returned ashore, and our boats followed afterwards with some of the officers and others. Some natives also came on board the frigate, and we made them presents of trifles in the way of clothing and trinkets. We found them to be a very poor and lowly people, whose possessions help to make them so importunate in begging that they become really too annoying. No ornaments of gold, silver,

[1] 1 *estado*=four *varas*, or 11 ft. 1½ inches. These statues were therefore, roughly speaking, half the size of the one measured near the beach.

[2] 1 *vara*=nearly a yard.

9: Forster T-5 (1774) 1777
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



1774. MARCH. cooling for the head. Mr. Hodges drew the figure of a
X175 woman with this cap on, and of a man with one of the
291 other head dreſſes; both are extremely characteriſtic of the nation, and have been engraved for captain Cook's account of this voyage. The only ornaments which we ſaw among
X175 them, were the flat pieces of bone in the ſhape of a tongue,
301 or like a laurel leaf, which both ſexes wore hanging on their breaſt, together with ſome necklaces and ear-jewels made of ſhells.

X175 After ſtaying among the natives for ſome time on the beach, we began to walk into the country. The whole ground was covered with rocks and ſtones of all ſizes, which ſeemed to have been expoſed to a great fire, where they had acquired a black colour and porous appearance. Two or three ſhrivelled ſpecies of graſſes grew up among theſe ſtones, and in a ſlight degree ſoftened the deſolate appearance of the country. About fifteen yards from the
X175 landing-place we ſaw a perpendicular wall of ſquare hewn
●164 ſtones, about a foot and a half or two feet long, and one foot broad. Its greateſt height was about ſeven or eight feet, but it gradually ſloped on both ſides, and its length might be about twenty yards. A remarkable circumſtance was the junction of theſe ſtones, which were laid after the moſt excellent rules of art, fitting in ſuch a manner as to make a durable piece of architecture. The ſtone itſelf of which they are cut is not of great hardneſs, being a black-

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9: Forster T-5 (1774) 1777
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



1774. MARCH.

iſh brown cavernous and brittle ſtony lava. The ground roſe from the water's ſide upwards; ſo that another wall, parallel to the firſt, about twelve yards from it and facing the country, was not above two or three feet high. The whole area between the two walls was filled up with ſoil and covered with graſs. About fifty yards farther to the ſouth there was another elevated area, of which the ſurface was paved with ſquare ſtones exactly ſimilar to thoſe which formed the walls. In the midſt of this area, there was a pillar conſiſting of a ſingle ſtone, which repreſented a human figure to the waiſt, about twenty feet high, and upwards of five feet wide. The workmanſhip of this figure was rude, and ſpoke the arts in their infancy. The eyes, noſe, and mouth were ſcarcely marked on a lumpiſh ill-ſhaped head; and the ears, which were exceſſively long, quite in the faſhion of the country, were better executed than any other part, though a European artiſt would have been aſhamed of them. The neck was clumſy and ſhort, and the ſhoulders and arms very ſlightly repreſented. On the top of the head a huge round cylinder of ſtone was placed upright, being above five feet in diameter and in height. This cap, which reſembled the head-dreſs of ſome Egyptian divinity, conſiſted of a different ſtone from the reſt of the pillar, being of a more reddiſh colour; and had a hole on each ſide, as if it had been made round by turning. The cap together with the head, made one half of the whole pillar

9: Forster T-5 (1774) 1777
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



1774. MARCH. with a muſket in his hand, but very juſtly reflected, that ſo ſlight a crime did not deſerve the puniſhment of a leaden bullet.

In our walk along the ſea-ſhore, we diſcovered a few ſtalks of the ſame ſpecies of celery which is plentiful on the beaches of New Zeeland, and we alſo found two other little plants common to that country. Whether theſe plants originally exiſted on the iſland, or ſprung up from ſeeds, which the current of the ſea, or birds by their plumage might tranſport from the oppoſite ſide of the ocean, I cannot venture to determine. We likewiſe met with a plantation of yams (*dioſcorea alata*, Linn.) which in ſo poor a *flora* as that of Eaſter Iſland was a great addition. The great correſpondence in the features, cuſtoms, and languages of theſe people, to thoſe of other natives of the South Sea iſlands, gave us ſome room to hope for ſuch domeſtic animals among them, as we had obſerved at Taheitee or New Zeeland. But notwithſtanding the moſt diligent ſearch, we never met with any other than common fowls, which were of a very ſmall breed, and had a dull plumage. It is true we obſerved alſo two or three noddies, which were ſo tame as to ſettle on the ſhoulders of the natives, but from theſe individuals we could not conclude, that they kept a regular breed of them.

About ſun-ſet we left the watering-place, and walked to the cove where our boat lay at a grapnel. In our way we paſſed

9: Forster T-5 (1774) 1777
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



paſſed over the area on which the ſingle pillar before-mentioned was placed. A few natives who ſtill accompanied us, made ſigns that we ſhould deſcend, and walk in the graſs at the foot of the pedeſtal; but ſeeing that we did not care to underſtand their geſtures, they made no other attempt to oppoſe our progreſs. We put ſome queſtions to the moſt intelligent perſons among them, concerning the nature of theſe ſtones, and from what we could underſtand, we concluded that they were monuments erected to the memory of ſome of their areekees, or kings. This led us to believe that the pedeſtal was perhaps to be conſidered as a burying-place, and on looking carefully round it, we found a number of human bones, which confirmed our conjecture. The length of theſe bones was exactly ſuch as might be expected in perſons of a middle ſtature, and a thigh-bone which we meaſured, exactly correſponded with that of a perſon about five feet nine inches high. To the weſtward of the cove, there was a range of three pillars, ſtanding on a very large elevated area or pedeſtal. This range the natives diſtinguiſhed by the name of *hanga-roa*, and the ſingle pillar they called *obeena*. About ten or twelve people were ſeated at a little diſtance from the laſt, round a ſmall fire, over which they had roaſted a few potatoes. Theſe ſerved for their ſupper, and they offered us ſome of them as we paſſed by. We were much ſurpriſed with this inſtance of hoſpitality in ſo poor a country, eſpecially when we

1774. MARCH.

175 X 764

175 X 574

10: Cooke D-5 (1886) 1899
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



rial, printed or plain, for the women. Shoes are worn on only special occasions of ceremony, as, for example, during our visit. On their heads both sexes alike wear hats, the material of which is either bulrushes or long, slender leaves, torn into narrow strips, braided and then sewn together spirally. In making these they are far behind other islanders, the Tahitians more especially, attributable mainly, however, to the want of proper material rather than to the lack of intelligence.

Crimes of any sort, but especially the graver ones, are of great rarity, and murder, at the present day, unknown. Petty thieving is common, is considered a venial offense, and the injured party seeks redress by stealing in kind, if possible, but in any event, stealing from the thief. There are no punishments, so called. Mr. Salmon, who is guide, philosopher, and friend to these people, unites in his person (and being a giant in stature, he can well contain them) the duties of referee, arbiter, judge. They entertain the greatest respect for him; evince the utmost affection; look up to him as their master; go to him with all their troubles; refer to him all their disputes and grievances. His word is law, and his decisions final and undisputed.

There is a schoolhouse in which the people are taught from books translated into Rapa Nui language by the priests formerly here, and most of the natives can read and write. The functions of pedagogue are performed, after a fashion, by Pakomeo, the survivor of the Peruvian captives, who is also a preacher among them and conducts the services at the little church. The form of salutation on meeting is kohomai, "come to me." The reply, koe, which means "thou," you, yourself. In Tahiti, Society Islands, and Rarotonga it is, Ia-ora-na, "may you live in God." In the Samoan group, kalofa, "love to you" and tofa, "may you sleep."

With regard to the burial rites, it may be stated that no particular respect is shown persons of rank while living; still less do they receive any special funeral ceremonies when dead. All are treated alike in this regard, on the principle, presumably, that death levels all. The period of mourning extends over three days, and the rites are simple enough. Nowadays the service of the church is usually invoked. The body is carried out of the house and removed to some distance, either in the open plain, or to one of the image platforms, or into a cave, where it is exposed to sun and air (incidentally, it may be mentioned, also to predatory rats and cats in a semiwild state, which roam the island in large numbers, the former especially) until either dry, decomposed, or partially devoured. In the caves the remains are then shoved into an out-of-the-way corner and walled in with loose stones. At the platforms they may be laid away under a gigantic prostrate stone image, or placed in an excavation, either in the face or floor of the platform, or simply put in a convenient spot and covered up with stones. On the plains a circular conical cairn, truncated at top, 6 to 8 feet high, and built of loose bowlders, is frequently erected over the remains. Often the bones

10: Cooke D-5 (1886) 1899
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



764 of several individuals may be found in one receptacle, and at one of the platforms a collection of skulls alone was discovered in a sepulcher which was opened.

The rats, which by reason of the loose manner of interment have free access to the remains, no doubt perform an important office as scavengers in disposing of the soft parts, since in no single instance were any bones found, either human or sheep—and the skeletons of both were frequently fallen in with—which were not completely denuded, and the fine litter, which was almost invariably found in the cranial cavity, showed where the rodents had been nest-hiding.

262 The food of the Rapa Nuiis comprises the following principal articles: Sugar cane, taro, sweet potatoes, bananas, fowl, shell and other fish in large quantities, tomatoes, pumpkins, figs, pigs, and rarely sheep and cattle.

417 Their manner of cultivating the soil is of the simplest description. Owing to the depredations of the numberless sheep and cattle, they are compelled to keep all their cultivated patches carefully inclosed, and as there is no wood on the island which can be applied to that purpose they are forced to use volcanic stones. Occasionally, therefore, one may see a wall about 2 feet thick by 6 or 8 feet high inclosing a plot of ground perhaps 50 feet square, in which will be found a variety of the plants above mentioned growing luxuriantly.

The average Rapa Nuiis, however, perhaps wisely, prefers a fence ready made to building one himself, and therefore selects the standing stone walls of one or more of the old houses, which he appropriates to his purpose. There are many of these scattered over the island, particularly on the eastern half. These require but little repair to put them in order and secure against the entrance of sheep, and, although small, they amply suffice to supply the needs of the native husbandmen. Of
241 course there is no pretense of cultivation; the ground is scratched; the article planted; the rest is intrusted to the care of the omnipotent *atua*.

The soil is rich, and ancient navigators report the island covered with vegetation, and yet one could not repress the feeling of surprise, in view of the present unpromising appearance of the surface and unfavorable surroundings, on seeing how vigorously and luxuriantly everything grew within these inclosures.

## LANGUAGE OF THE RAPA NUIIS.

192

### NAMES OF ANIMALS.

| | |
|---|---|
| Sheep | mamoi. |
| Horse | hoi. |
| Cattle | puaka. |
| Bow | oru tamahine. |
| Boar | oru tamaroa. |
| Hen | eufa. |
| Eel | koiro. |
| Black sea bass | koioti. |

11: Lavachery A-5 (1934-1935) 1937
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



But how can one account for the achievement of such a long journey? The Polynesians possessed vessels that could face the open sea; they were capable of taking sometimes more than 100 oarsmen and passengers. Further, they put to sea in squadrons. The canoes kept just as far apart as was possible without losing sight of each other. At night they came together. By thus distributing themselves over the surface of the sea they were able to discover even the smallest islands. Some canoes were lost, but there were enough to ensure that some should reach their objective. Navigation was by the stars, according to the direction of ocean currents and as the wind allowed. But in the Pacific there are regular winds in each season.

Whence came the Pascuans? Every indication points to the Gambier Islands. The similarity of the Mangarevian and Pascuan languages is a valuable clue. Then the Gambier Islands contain ancient monuments which call to mind the *ahus* more than do any of the other *maraes* of Polynesia. Father Honoré Laval, in an unpublished account[6] giving valuable information about the ancient culture of the Gambier Islands, speaks of statues resembling those of Easter Island. Finally, the Gambier Islands are those which are nearest to it on the west. The Polynesians probably found Easter Island devoid of monuments and uninhabited; but this statement lacks proof.

The present Pascuans would appear, then, to be the direct descendants of the architects and sculptors of the ancient monuments. Proof of this is to be found in a comparison of these monuments with those of other Polynesian islands. One must also cite the traditions current at the time of the first contact with white men, in which the names of sculptors and of their direct descendants were mentioned.

But there are also certain obvious facts of a common-sense kind. Many of the traditions relate to the construction of *ahus* at a very recent date. Now the statues were merely accessory to these burials—the images of ancestors set up there. If the monument is of recent date, that which adorns it will naturally be so too. Then again, the evidence of the first foreigners to arrive is in agreement; the *ahus* were in living use at the end of the eighteenth century and were seen by Gonzales and La Perouse. We collected traditions reporting that ceremonies were held there still during the nineteenth century.

There is no evidence of the existence of two cultures. Up to quite modern times, when the *ahus* were being made and used, the rites and ceremonies centering round Motunui and Orongo[7] and the great

[6] This will shortly be published, through the agency of my Swiss colleague Alfred Métraux, by the Bishop Museum, Honolulu.

[7] An islet and village situated to the west of Easter Island.

11: Lavachery A-5 (1934-1935)1937
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



174 764 god Maké Maké continued to take place. The last bird-man was drawn, according to Thompson, in 1880. It may be recalled that the house of the bird-man, the tomb reserved for him, was inside the *tapu* surrounding the quarry whence came the statues and where the oldest still stand. This is presumptive evidence in favor of a close connection between the cult of Orongo and that of ancestors. Perhaps sufficient importance has not been attached to the fact that Orongo contains breccia sculptures from Rano Raraku,[6] and that it is from Orongo that there came the most perfect example of the typical Easter Island statue, that at the British Museum.

174 532 Take on the other hand all those manifestations of the plastic skill of the Pascuans—the sculptures on stone and wood, the designs of the rock-carvings and tablets, of the rock paintings and tattoo marks. The technique varies with the raw material, but the uniformity of style is indisputable.

174 The abrupt end, as it seems, of the activities of Rano Raraku has been invoked both by the adherents of the theory of an age-old lost civilization and by those who favor the idea of a dual Pascuan culture. But the arrest of activity can be explained by simple, almost contemporary, causes. The exploitation of the volcano was controlled by the clan of the Tupahotus, and, as everywhere in Polynesia, by a group of specialists. It required only a war to partially destroy the specialists—and tradition tells of many wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century. An epidemic imported by the [164] whalers might equally be responsible; today each vessel that arrives brings some malady to the Pascuans. Finally, the Peruvian raids (1859–61) are traditionally reported to have given the coup-de-grace to the class of *maoris* (experts).

174 412 The fact that in 1886 the Pascuans had already forgotten how and why their activities had been brought to a close, as well as other facts about their culture—such as how the statues were transported, and the meaning of the tablets—is no evidence of the antiquity of these facts, nor does it justify an attribution to another culture. For we have seen these same Pascuans refusing to admit that the stone adzes could have been used to work wood; while it is certain that before 1860 iron must have been very rare in the island, and that their immediate forebears must necessarily have worked wood with the aforesaid adzes. On the other hand they freely admit that adzes and stone chisels were used to work the two kinds of andesite of which the statues, bols, and house stones were made. By a curious inversion the Pascuan regards wood as being harder and more difficult to work than

[6] A volcano in the eastern part of Easter Island. On its slopes is the quarry where the statues were hewn.

11: Lavachery A-5 (1934-1935)1937
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



sided over the experts in *rongorongo*, the repository of ancient traditions, genealogies, etc. They used tablets (Kohau *rongorongo*) engraved with signs as an aid to memory. The signs of *rongorongo* were the object of organized teaching.

The Pascuans practiced a form of double inhumation. The body was exposed on the *ahu* until the flesh dried up or turned to dust. The bones were then placed in the burial chambers. Sometimes the skull was preserved separately. There was a general fear of the spirits of the dead. Commemorative feasts were held in front of the tombs, where chickens were exchanged for a ritual purpose. The statues at the foot of Rano Raraku represent the dead. Several of them have tatoo marks which were still used during the historical period. Later, the images of the dead also were placed on the *ahus*.

The Pascuans had a large number of gods, the chief of whom was Makó Makó. The same name appeared in other Polynesian mythologies. It would seem to be connected with the source of that which supplied the material needs of the Pascuans—cultivation and fishing. It was thus connected with the Marquesan Tiki, whose mask it resembled in almost every detail. Makó Makó is the creator of birds. One of the less obscure features of his cult is the indication, by means of birds, of a man [10] who probably represents the god, and who each spring gives place to another. Ritual feasts at which human flesh was eaten were a part of this cult, as well as also initiation ceremonies at puberty.

The end of the old culture was hastened by the arrival of Europeans, who revealed a new world to the Pascuans, a world totally different from their own. From that time onward they lost without any effort both peace and the joy of life. Their restless spirit drove them to undertake the most savage warfare, which decimated them, ruined their culture and overthrow its monuments. Works of art were given up, traditions were lost, so that even the memory of their existence has perished. The whalers and slavers completed the task of destruction already well advanced. After being Christianized the Pascuans became ashamed of most of their past history, and essayed, not without success, to remove all traces of it from memory.

[10] Tangata Manu—bird man. He was the first to get possession of the first egg laid by the bird *Manutara* (breast) in the island of Motunui (spring equinox).

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133

PLATE 1



1. FACADE FACING SEA. AHU OF ANAKENA. EASTER ISLAND.
The huge blocks are worked only at the joints.



2. VOLCANO OF RANO RARAKU, EASTER ISLAND, SHOWING STATUES BELOW QUARRY.

[End plate 1]

11: Lavachery A-5 (1934-1935) 1937
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

14: Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1917
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

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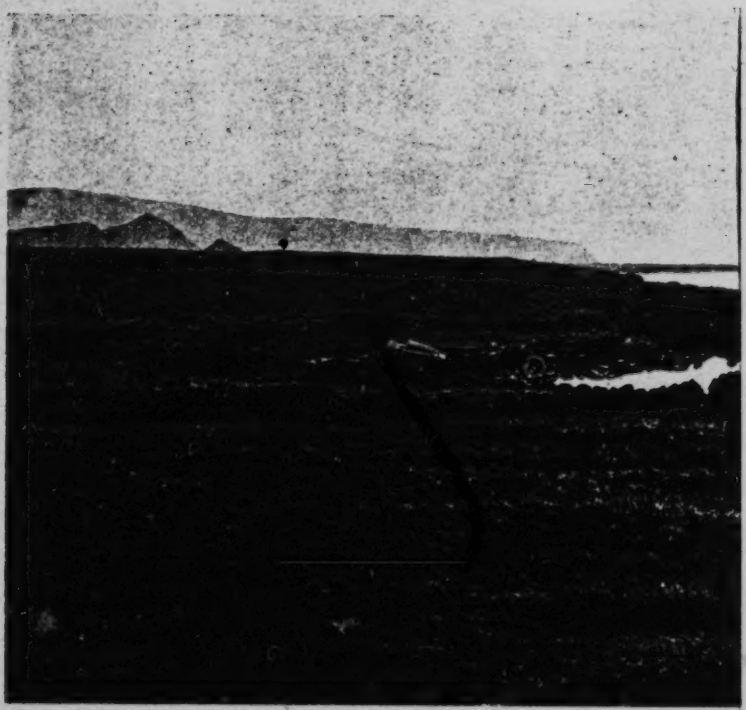

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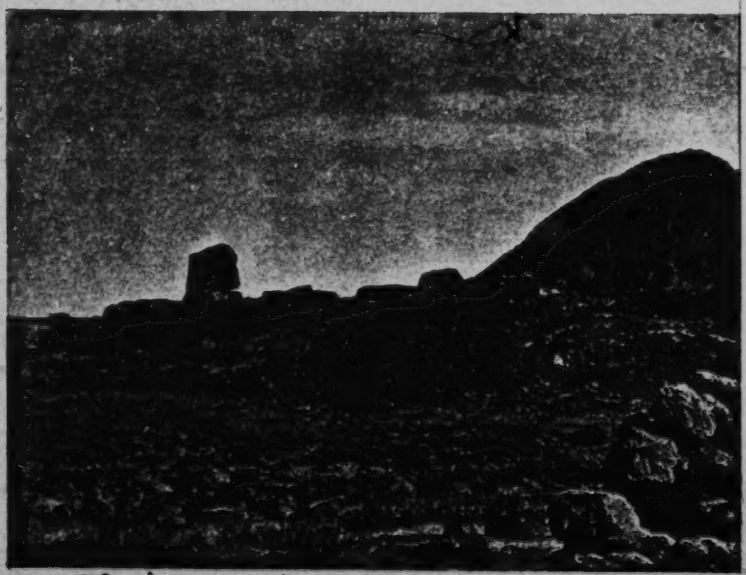

[facing p. 324 a]

GREAT AHU OF TONGARI

14: Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1917
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

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A TYPICAL AHU FROM LANDWARD, WITH IMAGES ON THEIR FACES A

AHU OF TONGARIKI FROM SEAWARD WITH BASES OF FALLEN IMAGES. SOUTH

[facing p. 324b]

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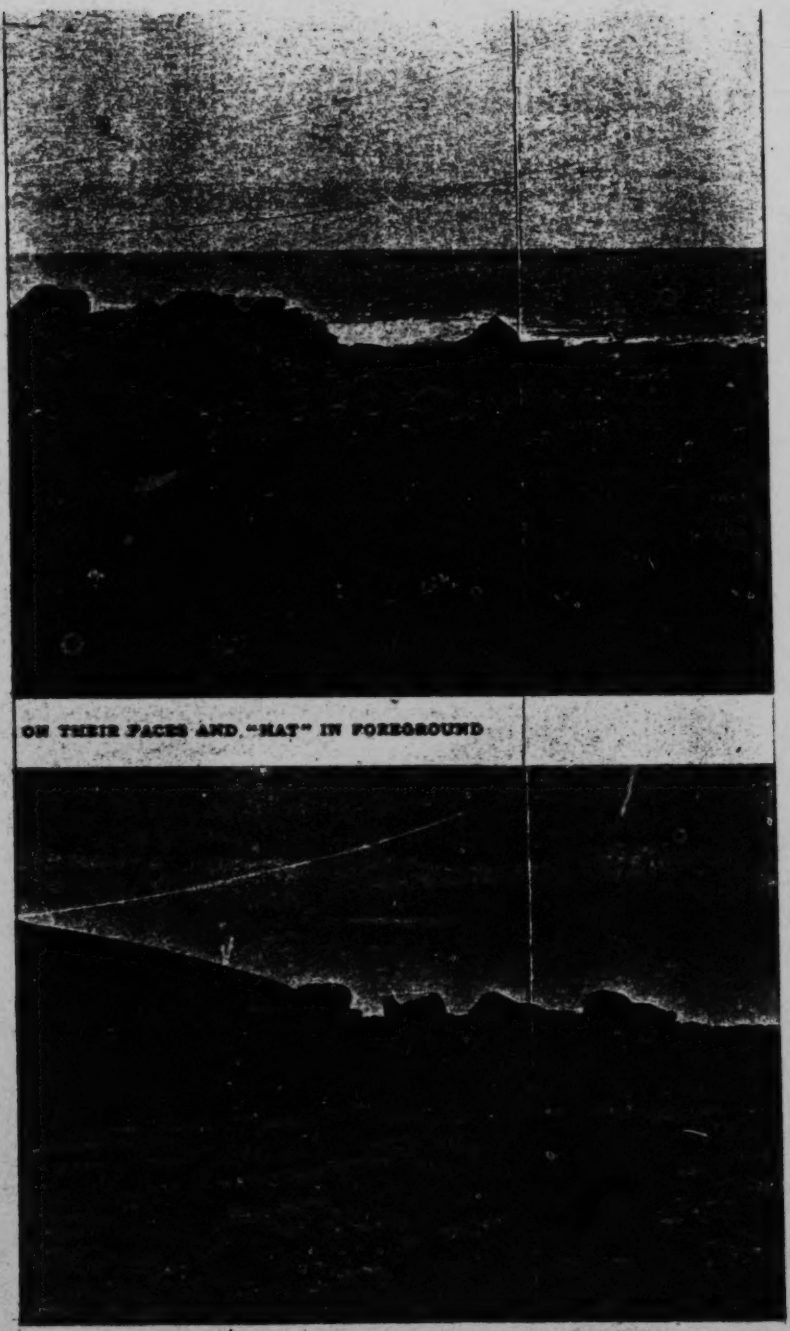

ON THEIR FACES AND "HAT" IN FOREGROUND

EN IMAGES. SOUTH-EAST FACE OF RANO RARAKU IN DISTANCE

[facing p. 324c]

14: Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1917
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

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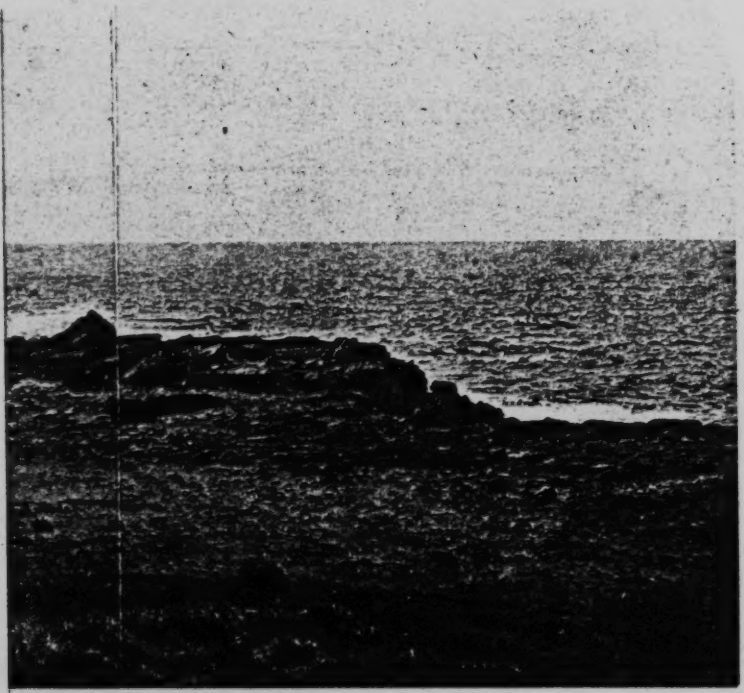
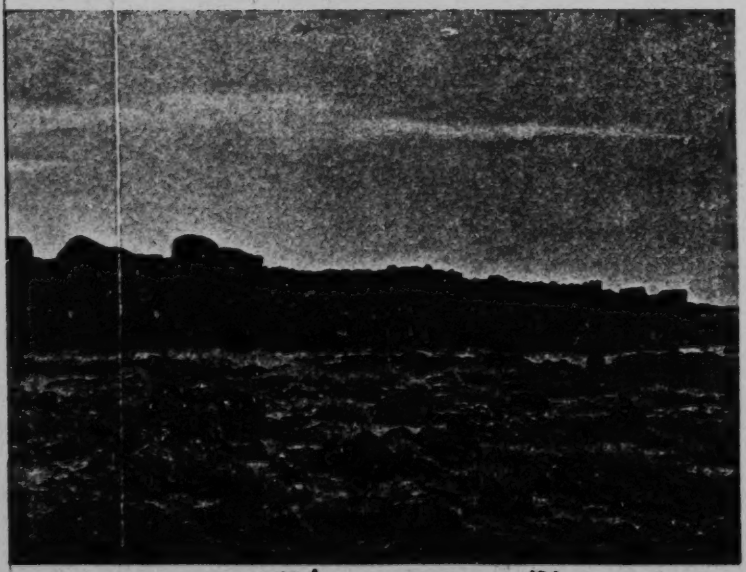


ROUND



RARAKU IN DISTANCE [facing p. 324d]

14: Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1917
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



the island. We received during these months another visit from the Germans. This time it was the cruiser *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*, which for about a week used the island as a base to secure fresh meat and to coal from a captured French collier, which she subsequently sank off the island. On departing she left with us her prisoners of war, nearly fifty English and French sailors. When at length in the following March the *Mana* returned she was at once despatched with messages to the British representative at Santiago, informing him of the use to which the enemy were putting the neutral territory of Chile, and of a suspicious vessel seen in the neighbourhood of the island.

So much for our experiences on the island; let us now turn to the scientific work, and deal first with Archæology.

Easter Island is a mass of stones; it is also a mass of ruins. Every one who has come to the island, from its earliest inhabitant to recent ranch managers, has for one reason or another made buildings or walls of these stones, while every succeeding generation has allowed those of its predecessor to fall to pieces, if indeed it has not wilfully destroyed them. Certain things can of course at once be recognized as megalithic remains; but in the majority of instances it requires an education of many months to know whether tumble-down stones are, for example, an old burial-place or a ranch wall which has been allowed to fall into disuse. Unfortunately in some instances the ancient and modern are inextricably mixed. All the way round the coast are the remains of what have been known as the stone Terraces or Platforms, the native name for which is *Ahu*. An early manager was seized with the idea that the sheep injured themselves by drinking salt water and that it was necessary to build a wall to keep them from it, although the sheep had in reality found the streams of fresh water which flow into the sea below high-water mark. It was obviously most convenient from the manager's point of view to run such a wall along a succession of terraces, using their stone for its construction. Thus a large number of these unique remains have been ruined. Some also are gradually falling into the sea from coast erosion. The terraces have been used for the disposal of the dead; a few lie inland, but the majority are near the coast, and extend all round it, numbering about two hundred, all of which have been measured and described. They are of four different types. Of three of these—interesting as they are—there is no time to speak. The fourth is the type of construction on which stood the great figures noted by the early navigators. These terraces, or *ahu*, consisted of a long wall on the side facing the sea, averaging about 300 feet in length and 8 to 14 feet in height, flanked on the land side by a paved slope of masonry. Some walls are of comparatively rough construction; in others the stones are beautifully wrought and fitted, in some instances with great slabs as much as 7 or 8 feet in height. The wall consists of a central portion and of two wings, which are continuous with the centre but slightly set back from the sea. The

14: Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1917
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



structure contains vaults in which the bones of the dead were buried, and its surface was used for the exposure of corpses, which were wrapped in matting and supported on sticks. On the top of the centre wall is a level platform on which stood the images, each supported on a stone slab or pedestal. They had their backs to the sea and looked inland over the corpses and bones of the dead. No complete statue is now standing on its bed-plate. Luckily however the lower portion of one still remains *in situ* on the terrace of Tongariki. The images have generally fallen forward, and, in the best preserved instances, lie in a row on their faces; but in a few cases one may be seen lying on its back toward the sea. Some have been considerably damaged in the fall, but not a few are intact. It has been suggested that the images were thrown down by an earthquake. This possibility was carefully borne in mind, but nothing was found to confirm such an idea. It seems, on the other hand, certain that they were deliberately overthrown by the victor in tribal wars, and that this was accomplished by removing stones underneath the pedestals on which they stood.

The images never varied in their general characteristics, and the best idea of them can be gained from the one brought to England in 1868 by H.M.S. *Topaze*, which now stands in the porch of the British Museum. It is a half figure cut off at the termination of the trunk, and with the arms placed so that the hands nearly meet in front of the body. Careful study on the island made clear that it portrays not a standing figure but a sitting one. The length of the ears shows that the statues represent a people whose custom it was to extend the lobe: and this is one of the few clues to their history. A perfect idea of the hands can be obtained only by excavation of unweathered specimens.

Some of the images on the terraces have been more than 30 feet in height, but from about 12 feet to 18 or 20 feet are more usual measurements. The crowns on the heads of the statues were about 5 feet in height, and were made of a different stone—a red volcanic ash obtained from the centre of the island, where a small crater stands on the side of a larger volcano. A few unfinished hats still remain inside this crater, but a larger number are found on the side of the hill or on the low ground at its foot. They may have been in the course of removal to the terraces when the work was stopped. The crowns found here are nearly cylindrical in form; the work must therefore have been finished on the terraces, for the completed hat has a knob on the top and a hollow on the lower side where it fitted on the head of the image. This depression is not in the centre, but leaves a larger brim to project over the eyes, an arrangement noted by the earlier voyagers, who studied the question how the hat maintained its balance.

The statues were made in the quarry of Rano Raraku, an old volcano which stands alone at the eastern end of the island near the south coast. This is the most interesting place in the island. It was unfortunately never

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



172 Anyone who is able to go to the British Museum can see a typical specimen of an Easter Island statue, in the large image which greets the approaching visitor from under the portico (fig. 31). The general form is unvarying, and with one exception, which will be alluded to hereafter, all appear to be the work of skilled hands, which suggests that the design was well known and evolved under other conditions. It represents a half-length figure, at the bottom of which the hands nearly meet in front of the body. The most remarkable features are the ears, of which the lobe is depicted to represent a fleshy rope (fig. 58), while in a few cases the disc which was worn in it is also indicated (fig. 59). The fashion of piercing and distending the lobe of the ear is found among various primitive races.[1] The tallest statues are over 30 feet, a few are only 6 feet, and even smaller specimens exist. Those which stood on the burial-places, now to be described, are usually from 12 to 20 feet in height, and were surmounted with a form of hat.[2]

●764 *Position and Number of Ahu.*—In Easter Island the problem of the disposal of the dead was solved by neither earth-burial nor cremation, but by means of the omnipresent stones which were built up to make a last resting-place for the departed. Such burial-places are known as "ahu," and the name will henceforth be used, for it signifies a definite thing, or rather type of thing, for which we have no equivalent. They number in all some two hundred and sixty, and are principally found near the coast, but some thirty exist inland, sufficient to show that their erection on the sea-board was a matter of convenience, not of principle. With the exception of the great eastern and [368] western headlands, where they are scarce, it is probably safe to say that, in riding round the island, it is impossible to go anywhere for more than a few hundred yards without coming across one of these abodes of the dead. They cluster most thickly on the little coves and their enclosing promontories, which were the principal centres of population. Some are two or three hundred yards away from the edge of the cliff, others stand on the verge; in the lower land they are but little above the sea-level, while on the precipitous part of the coast the ocean breaks hundreds of feet below.

[1] For an illustrated description of the method of expanding the ear, see *With a Prehistoric People, the Akikuyu of British East Africa*, p. 32.
[2] A full description of the statues is given in chap. xiv.

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

Rano Raraku. Ahu Kia-ori-ori. Ahu Akahanga.

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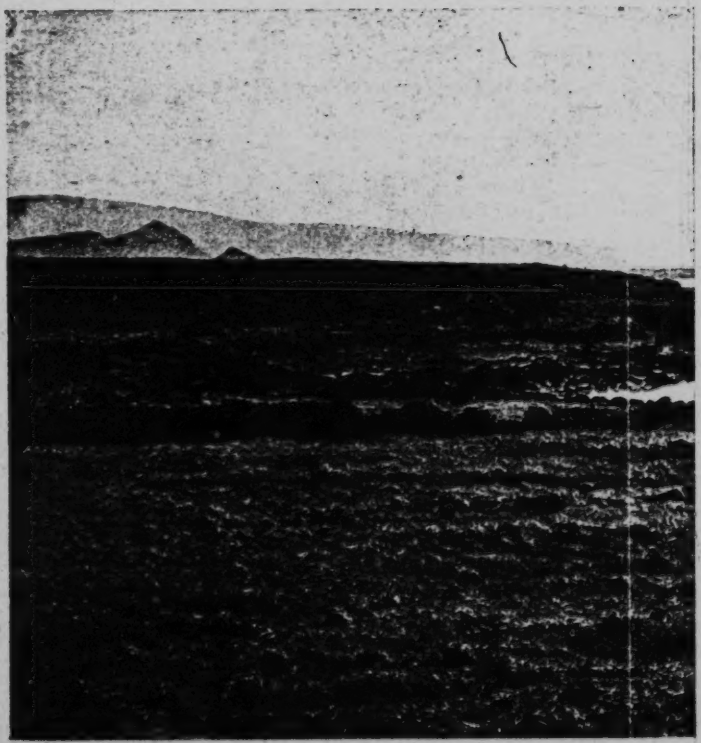

[facing p. 166-A(a)]

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15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



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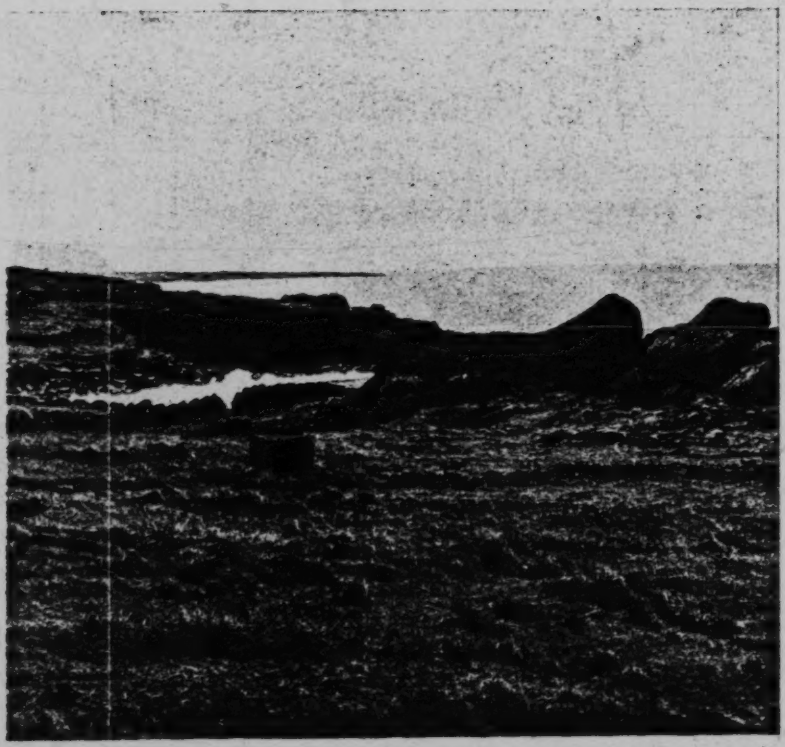

AKAHANGA COVE AND NEIGHBOU

[facing p. 166 - A(b)]

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OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

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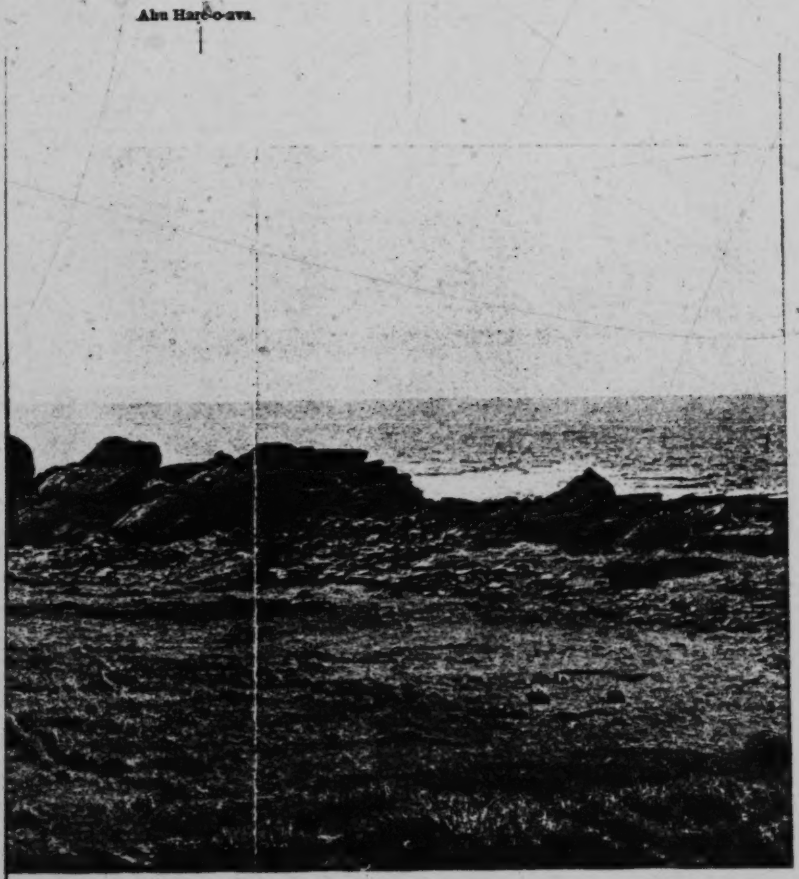


VE AND NEIGHBOURING AHU.

[facing p. 166 A(c)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

FIG. 32.

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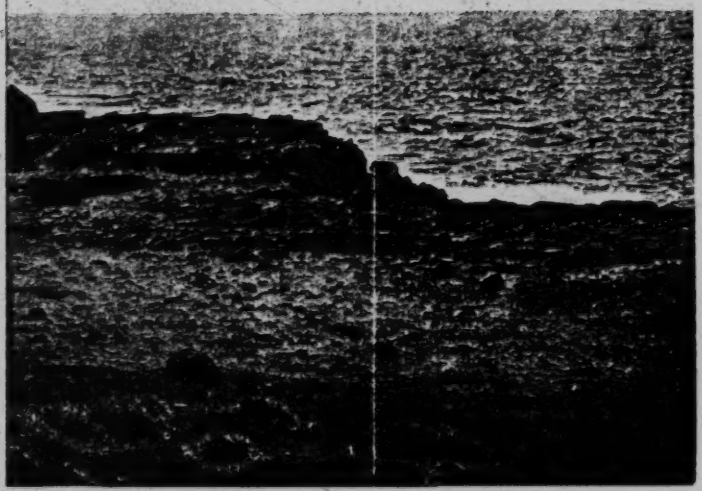

[facing p. 166 – A(d)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

Portion of an image still standing.

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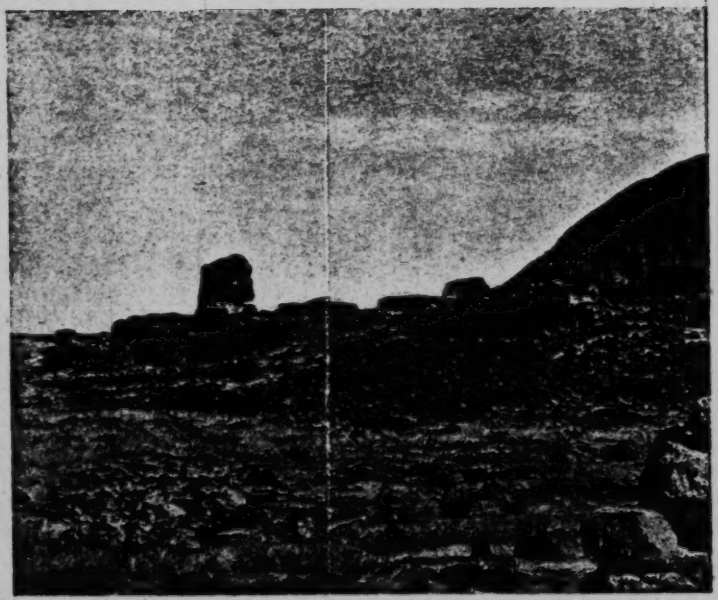

(A modern



[facing p. 166-B(a)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
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Rano Raraku, S.E. face.

133
764
172

(A modern wall.)

AHU TONGARIKI, SEAWARD SI.

[Facing p. 166-B(b)]

115 Routledge E 45 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

Ruins of fallen images.

133
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172

GARIKI, SEAWARD SIDE.

[facing p. 166-B(c)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

FIG. 33.

133
172
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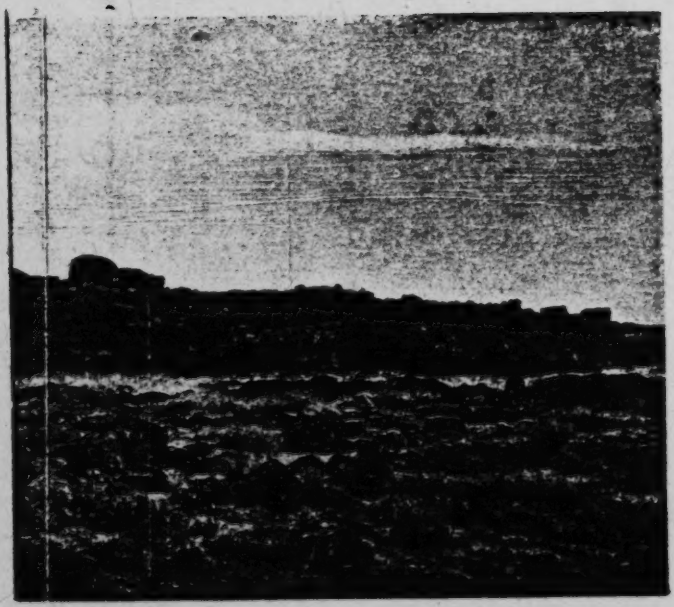

[facing p. 166-B(d)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
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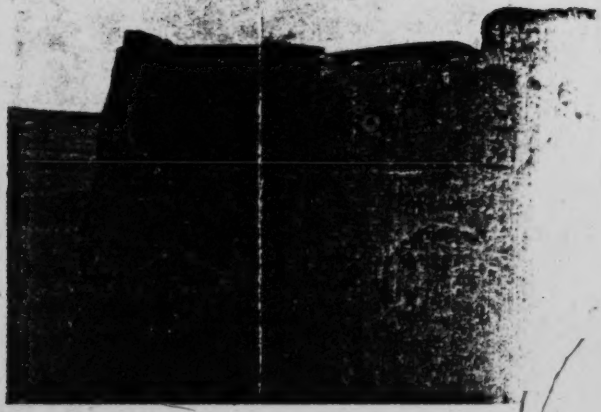

[facing p. 166-D (a)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

172
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Central portion.

AHU VINAPU.

[facing p. 166-D(b)]

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OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

172
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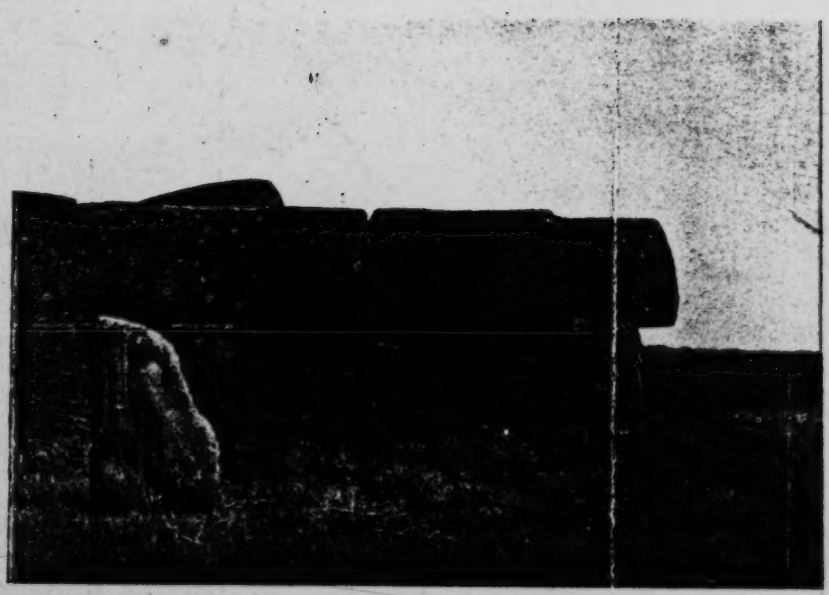

AHU VINAPU.

[pacing p. 166 – D (c)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

FIG. 35.

172
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Wing.



[facing p. 166 – D (2)]

15;Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



It was these burial-places, on which the images were then standing, which so strongly impressed the early voyagers and whose age and origin have remained an unsolved problem.

During the whole of our time on the island we worked on the ahu as way opened. Those which happened to lie near to either of our camps were naturally easy of access, but to reach the more distant ones, notably those on the north shore, involved a long expedition. Such a day began with perhaps an hour's ride; at noon there was an interval for luncheon, when, in hot weather, the neighbourhood was scoured for miles to find the smallest atom of shade; and the day ended with a journey home of not less than two hours, during which an anxious eye was kept on the sinking sun. The usual method, as each ahu was reached, was for S. to dismount, measure it and describe it; while I sat on my pony and scribbled down notes; but in some manner or other every part of the coast was by one or both of us ridden over several times, and a written statement made of the size, kind, condition, and name of each monument.

Unfortunately there is in existence no large-scale plan of the coast, a need we had to supply as best we could; map of Easter Island there is none, only the crude chart; the efforts of our own surveyor were limited, by the time at his disposal, to making detailed plans of a few of the principal spots. The want is to be regretted geographically, but it does not materially affect the archæological result. We were always accompanied by native guides in order to learn local names and traditions, and it was soon found necessary to make a point of these being old men; owing to the concentration of the remains of the population in one district, all names elsewhere, except those of the most important places, are speedily being forgotten. The memories of even the older men were sometimes shaky, and to get reasonably complete and accurate information the whole of a district had, in more than one case, to be gone over again with a second ancient who turned out to have lived in the neighbourhood in his youth and hence to be a better authority.

*Original Design and Construction of Image Ahu.*—The burial-places are not all of one type, nor all constructed to carry statues; some also are known to have been built comparatively recently, and will therefore be described under a later section. The image ahu are, however, all prehistoric. They number just

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



764 532 under a hundred, or over one-third of the whole.[1] The figures connected with them, of which traces still remain, were counted as 231, but as many are in fragments, this number is uncertain.

764 532 333 A typical image ahu (fig. 36) is composed of a long wall running parallel with the sea, which, in a large specimen, is as much as 15 feet in height and 300 feet in length; it is buttressed on the land side with a great slope of masonry. The wall is in three divisions. The main or central portion projects in the form of a terrace on which the images stood, with their backs to the sea; it is therefore broad enough to carry their oval bed-plates; these measure up to about 10 feet in length by 8 feet or 9 feet in width, and are flush with the top of the wall. On the great ahu of Tongariki there have been fifteen statues, but sometimes an ahu has carried one figure only.

764 333 The wall which forms the landward side of the terrace is continued on either hand in a straight line, thus adding a wing at each end of the central portion which stands somewhat farther back from the sea (fig. 41). Images were sometimes placed on the wings, but it was not usual. From this continuous wall the masonry slopes steeply till it reaches a containing wall, some 3 feet high, formed of finely wrought slabs of great size and of peculiar shape; the workmanship put into this wall is usually the most highly finished of any part of the ahu. Extending inland from the foot of this low wall is a large, raised, and smoothly paved expanse. The upper surface of this, too, has an appreciable fall, or slope, inland, though it is almost horizontal, when compared with the glacis.

By the method of construction of this area, vault accommodation is obtained between its surface pavement and the sheet of volcanic rock below, on which the whole rests. In the largest specimen the whole slope of masonry, measured that is from either the sea-wall of the wing or from the landward wall of the terrace to its farthest extent, is about 250 feet. Beyond this the ground is sometimes levelled for another 50 or 60 yards, forming a smooth sward which much enhanced the appearance of the ahu. In two cases the ahu is approached by a strip of narrow pavement formed of water-worn boulders laid flat, and bordered with the same kind of stone set on end; one of these

[1] This excludes some fifteen which may have carried statues, but about which doubt exists.

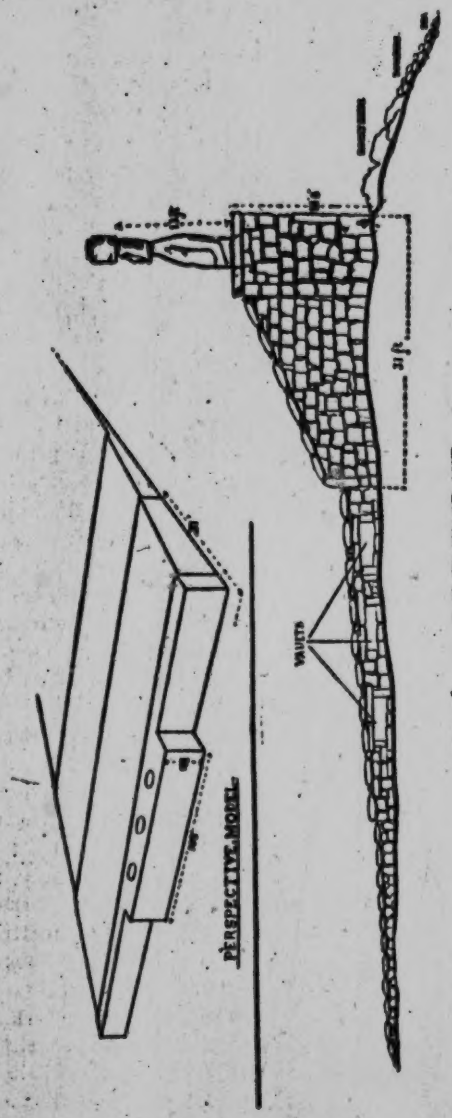


FIG. 36.—DIAGRAM OF IMAGE ARU.

[p. 169]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

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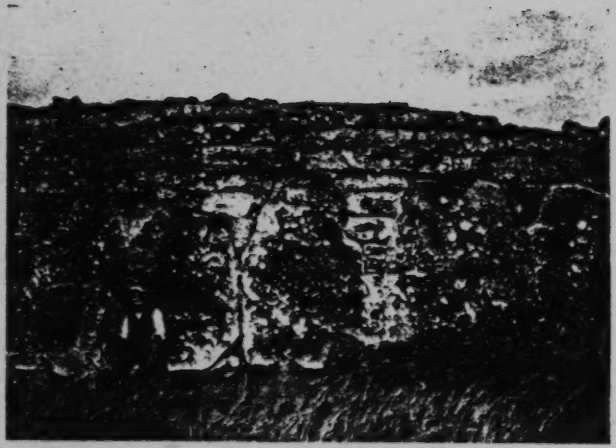
FIG. 37.



AHU TEPEU.

Part of seaward wall showing large slabs—some of the stones forming upper courses are wrought foundation-stones of canoe-shaped houses, pp. 215–16.



[facing p. 170]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



pavements is 220 feet in length by 12 feet in width, the other is somewhat smaller (fig. 93).

The general principle on which the sea or main walls are constructed is usually the same, though the various ahu differ greatly in appearance: first comes a row of foundation blocks on which have been set upright the largest stones that could be found; the upper part of the wall is composed of smaller stones, and it is finished with a coping. The variety in effect is due to the difference in material used. In some cases, as at Tongariki (fig. 33), the most convenient stone available has consisted of basalt which has cooled in fairly regular cubes, and the rows are there comparatively uniform in size; in other instances, as at Ahu Tepeu on the west coast (fig. 37), the handiest material has been sheets of lava, which have hardened as strata, and when these have been used the first tier of the wall is composed of huge slabs up to 9 feet in height. Irregularities in the shape and size of the big stones are rectified by fitting in small pieces and surmounting the shorter slabs with additional stones until the whole is brought to a uniform level; on the top of this now even tier horizontal blocks are laid, till the whole is the desired height (fig. 42). The amount of finish put into the work varies greatly: in many ahu the walls are all constructed of rough material; in others, while the slabs are untouched, the stones which bring them to the level and the cubes on the top are well wrought; in a very few instances, of which Vinapu (fig. 35) is the best example, the whole is composed of beautifully finished work. Occasionally, as at Oroi, natural outcrops of rock have been adapted to carry statues (fig. 122).

The study of the ahu is simplified by the fact that they were being used in living memory for the purpose for which they were doubtless originally built. They have been termed "burial-places," but burial in its usual sense was not the only, nor in most cases their principal, object. On death the corpse was wrapped in a tapa blanket and enclosed in its mattress of reeds; fish-hooks, chisels, and other objects were sometimes included. It was then bound into a bundle and carried on staves to the ahu, where it was exposed on an oblong framework. This consisted of four corner uprights set up in the ground, the upper extremities of which were Y-shaped, two transverse bars rested in the bifurcated ends, one at the head, the other at the foot, and

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FIG. 38.

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METHOD OF EXPOSING THE DEAD FROM ILLUSTRATED DESCRIPTIONS.

171]

[facing p. 171]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



on these transverse bars were placed the extremities of the bundle which wrapped the corpse. The description and sketch are based on a model framework, and a wrapped-up figure, one of the wooden images of the island, prepared by the natives to amplify their verbal description.[1] At times, instead of the four supports, two stones were used with a hole in each, into which a Y-shaped stick was placed (fig. 38). While the corpse remained on the ahu the district was marked off by the péra, or taboo, for the dead; no fishing was allowed near, and fires and cooking were forbidden within certain marks—the smoke, at any rate, must be hidden or smothered with grass. Watch was kept by four relatives, and anyone breaking the regulations was liable to be brained. The mourning might last one, two, or even three years, by which time the whole thing had, of course, fallen to pieces. The bones were either left on the ahu, or collected and put into vaults of oblong shape, which were kept for the family, or they might be buried elsewhere. The end of the mourning was celebrated by a great feast, after which ceremony, as one recorder cheerfully concluded, "Pappa was finished."

Looked at from the landward side, we may, therefore, conceive an ahu as a vast theatre stage, of which the floor runs gradually upwards from the footlights. The back of the stage, which is thus the highest part, is occupied by a great terrace, on which are set up in line the giant images, each one well separated from his neighbour, and all facing the spectator. Irrespective of where he stands he will ever see them towering above him, clear cut out against a turquoise sky. In front of them are the remains of the departed. Unseen, on the farther side of the terrace, is the sea. The stone giants, and the faithful dead over whom they watch, are never without music, as countless waves launch their strength against the pebbled shore, showering on the figures a cloud of mist and spray.

*Reconstruction and Transformation.*—Those which have been described are ideal image ahu, but not one now remains in its original condition. It is by no means unusual to find, even in the oldest parts now existing, that is in walls erected to carry statues, pieces of still older images built into the stonework; in one case a whole statue has been used as a slab for the sea-wall,

[1] The body was no doubt supported by staves, though they were dispensed with in the model, being unnecessary for the wooden figure.

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FIG. 39.

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A SEMI-PYRAMID AHU.

FIG. 40.

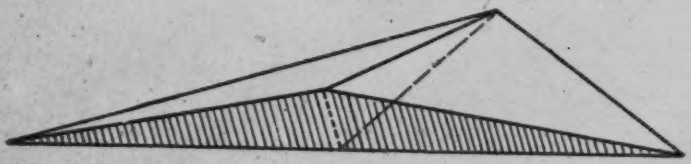

DIAGRAM OF SEMI-PYRAMID AHU.

[facing p. 172]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
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764 333 showing that alteration has taken place even when the cult was alive (fig. 42). Again, a considerable number of ahu, some thirteen in all, after being destroyed and terminating their career as image-terraces, have been rebuilt after the fashion of others constructed originally on a different plan (fig. 39). This is a type for which no name was found: it is in form that of a semi-pyramid, and there are between fifty and sixty on the island, in addition to those which have been in the first place image-ahu (fig. 42). A few are comparatively well made, but most are very rough. They resemble a pyramid cut in two, so that the section forms a triangle; this triangle is the sea-wall; the flanking buttress on the land side is made of stones, and is widest at the apex or highest point, gradually diminishing to the angles or extremities. The greatest height, in the centre, varies from about 5 feet to 12 feet, and a large specimen may extend in length from 100 feet to 160 feet. They contain vaults. In a few instances they are ornamented by broken pieces of image-stone, and occasionally by a row of small cairns along the top, which recall the position of the statues on the image-platform; for these no very certain reason was forthcoming, they were varyingly reported to be signs of "péra" or as marking the respective right of families on the ahu. As image-terraces may be found reconstructed as pyramid ahu, the latter form of building must have been carried on longer than the former, and probably till recent times, but there is nothing to show whether or not the earliest specimens of pyramid ahu are contemporary with the great works, or even earlier.

764 *Overthrow of the Images and Destruction of the Ahu.*—The only piece of a statue which still remains on its bed-plate is the fragment already alluded to at Tongariki (fig. 34). In the best-preserved specimens the figures lie on their faces like a row of huge nine-pins; some are intact, but many are broken, the cleavage having generally occurred when the falling image has come in contact with the containing wall at the lower level. The curious way in which the heads have not infrequently turned a somersault while falling and now lie face uppermost is shown in the eighth figure from the western end on Tongariki ahu (fig. 34).

173 No one now living remembers a statue standing on an ahu; and legend, though not of a very impressive character, has

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FIG. 41.

AHU MAHATUA, SEAWARD SIDE

Image also, with east wing clearly defined. Landward side and centre converted to semi-pyramid form.



[facing p. 173]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
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532

FIG. 42.

AHU MAITAKI-TE-MOA, SEAWARD SIDE.

An image ahu partially destroyed and changed to semi-pyramid type. A statue from Rarnku lies in foreground; another statue of different stone forms part of the main wall.



[facing p. 174 (A)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

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532

FIG. 43.

AHU RUNGA-VAE, ON SOUTH COAST, UNDERMINED BY THE SEA.
Statue has fallen backwards

[Facing p. 174 (B)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
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FIG. 44.

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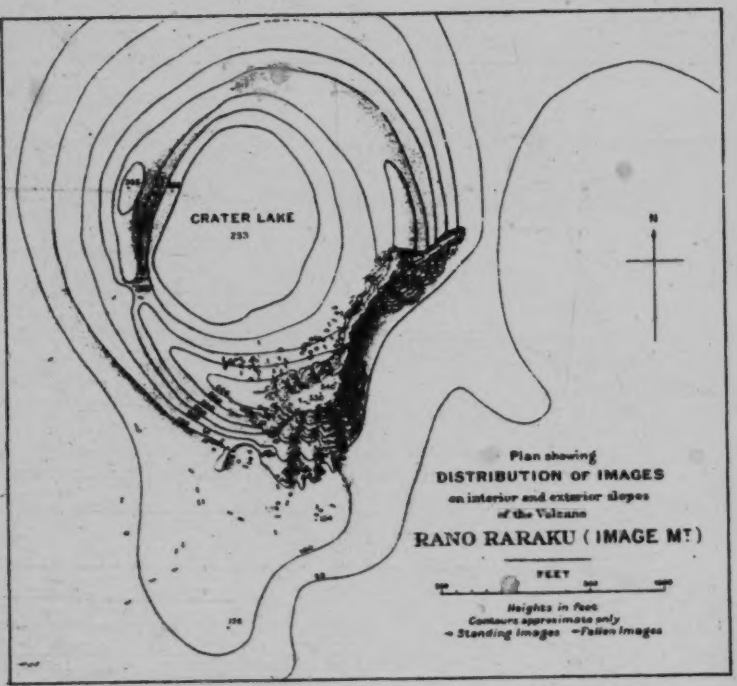


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[facing p. 174 (D)]



[Opposite fig. 43

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

133
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316

[facing p. 174 (F-1)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

133
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316

RANO RARAKU FROM THE SOUT
Images prostrate in foreground and erect on slop

[facing p. 174 (F-2)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

133
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316

RAKU FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.
foreground and erect on slope; quarries above.

[facing p. 174 (F-3)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
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FIG. 46.

133
764
316

[facing p. 174 (F-4)]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



532 doubt have been taken, two images have been set up, one slightly in front of the other; six still unfinished figures lie in close proximity (figs. 70 and 71). The standing figure, nearest to the lake, bore a rough design on the face, and when it was dug out the back was found to be covered with similar incised marks. [123] The natives were much excited, and convinced that we should receive a large sum of money in England when the photograph of these was produced, for nothing ever dispelled the illusion that the expedition was a financial speculation. It was these carvings more especially that we ourselves hastily endeavoured to cover up when, on the arrival of Admiral von Spee's Squadron, we daily expected a visit from the officers on board. The markings have certainly not been made by the same practised hand as the raised girdle and rings, and appear to be comparatively recent (fig. 64). Other statues were excavated, where similar marks were noticed, but, except in this case, digging led practically always to disappointment. It was the part above the surface only which had been used as a block on which to scrawl design, from the same impulse presumably as impels the school-boy of to-day to make marks with chalk on a hoarding. On one ahu the top of the head of a statue has been decorated with rough faces, the carving evidently having been done after the statue had fallen.

172 532 764 In digging out the image with the tattooed back, we came across the one and only burial which was found in connection with these figures; it was close to it and at the level of the rings. The long bones, the patella, and base of the skull were identified; they lay in wet soil, crushed and intermixed with large stones, so the attitude could not be determined beyond the fact that the head was to the right of the image and the long bones to the left. These bones had become of the consistency of moist clay, and could only be identified by making transverse sections of them with a knife, after first cleaning portions longitudinally by careful scraping.

In several other instances human bones were discovered near the statues, but, like the carvings, they appeared to be of later date than the images. One skull was found beneath a figure which was lying face downwards on the surface; another fragment must have been placed behind the base after the statue had fallen forward. The natives stated that in the epidemics which

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ravaged the island the statues afforded a natural mark for depositing remains. In the same way a head near an ahu, which was at first thought to be that of a standing statue, turned out to be broken from the trunk and put up pathetically to mark the grave of a little child. There is a roughly constructed ahu on the outside of Rano Raraku at the corner nearest to the sea, of which more will be said hereafter, and a quarried block of rock on the very top of the westerly peak was also said to be used for the exposure of the dead (no. 75, fig. 47). Close to this block there are some very curious circular pits cut in the rock; one examined was 5 feet 6 inches in depth and 3 feet 6 inches in diameter (no. 74, fig. 47). It is possible they were used as vaults, but, if so, the shape is quite different from those of the ahu. The conclusion arrived at was that the statues themselves were not directly connected with burials. There seems also no reason to believe that they are put up in any order or method; they appear to have been erected on any spot handy to the quarries where there was sufficient earth, or even, as has been seen, in the quarry itself when circumstances permitted.

*The South-Eastern Side of Rano Raraku* is a problem in itself. The great wall formed by the cliff is like the ramparts of some giant castle rent by vertical fissures. The greatest height, the top of the peak, is about five hundred feet, of which the cliff forms perhaps half, the lower part being a steep but comparatively smooth bank of detritus. Over the grassy surface of this bank are scattered numerous fragments of rock, weighing from a few pounds to many tons, which have fallen down from above. The kitchen tent in our camp at the foot had a narrow escape from being demolished by one of these stones, which nearly carried it away in the impetus of its descent. It has never been suggested that this face of the mountain was being worked, nevertheless, it was subsequently difficult to understand how we lived so long below it, gazing at it daily, before we appreciated the fact that here also, although in much lesser degree, were both finished and embryo images. At last one stone was definitely seen to be in the form of a head, and excavation showed it to be an erected and buried statue. A few other figures were found standing and prostrate, and some unfinished images; these last, however,

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idols,[1] from which it may be gathered that the great majority were still erect. The figures were, they tell us, all set up on small stones, and burying-places were in front. It is interesting, in view of what we know of the prohibition of smoke near the ahu,[2] to find one of the Spanish writing: "They could not bear us to smoke cigars; they begged our sailors to extinguish them, and they did so. I asked one of them the reason, and he made signs that the smoke went upwards; but I do not know what this meant."[3] Cook's people observed that the natives disliked these burying-places being walked over, but whereas Roggeveen was convinced, whether rightly or wrongly, that the cult of the statues was what we should call "a going concern," Cook, fifty years later, is equally certain that it is a thing of the past; some of the figures are still standing, but some are fallen down, and the inhabitants "do not even trouble to repair the foundations of those which are going to decay." "The giant statues," he says, "are not in my opinion looked upon as idols by the present inhabitants, whatever they may have been in the days of the Dutch." Forster also remarks that "they are so disproportionate to the strength of the nation, it is most reasonable to look upon them as the remains of better times." La Pérouse does not agree with this last sentiment; he admits that at present the monuments are not respected, but he sees no reason why they should not still be made even under existing conditions; he thinks that a hundred people would be sufficient to put one of the statues in place. The objection he sees is that the people have no chief great enough to secure such a memorial. It is unfortunate that the mountain of Rano Raraku is so far removed from both the north and west anchorages, that none of the voyagers discovered it, although Cook's men were very near that from which the crowns were obtained.

In the nineteenth century we have a few accounts from passing voyagers. Lisiansky, in 1804, found no people with long ears,[4] but in 1825 Beechey in H.M.S. *Blossom* says that there were still a few to be seen. With regard to the statues, the process of

[1] MS. copy in the British Museum of a letter sent by one of the officers of the Spanish ship to a Canon or a Prebendary in Buenos Aires. MSS. 17607 (18). Our attention was drawn to this document by Dr. Corney.
[2] See above, p. 171.
[3] *Voyage of Gonzales*, p. 126.
[4] *Voyage Round the World in the Ship "Neva,"* Lisiansky, Lond. 1814, p. 58.

411 used both as a spear and as a javelin. A site is pointed out near Anakena, where a man throwing down hill killed another at about thirty-five yards. The art of making these mataa is, of course, practically extinct, but one old man, commonly known as "Hé" (fig. 83), brought us some which he had manufactured himself for the Expedition, and which were fairly well wrought.

622 With the exception of the Miru, of which more will be said, there were no chiefs nor any form of government; any man who was expert in war became a leader. The warfare consisted largely of spasmodic and isolated raids; an aggrieved person 726 gathered together his neighbours and descended on the offenders. It is related incidentally that one man, going along the south coast, "found war going on," one set of men having blocked up another in a cave. Another story is told of six men, called Gwaruti-mata-keva, of the clan Tupahotu, who lived in a cave in a certain hillock on the south coast, known as Toa-toa. They went round in a boat to Hanga Piko, stole fish, and returned rapidly to their cave. A hundred men from Hanga Piko then came overland to punish the robbery, and made a fire of grass before the cave in which the men lay hidden. When the attackers assumed that the enemy were all dead from suffocation, they went into the cave; but those within had buried their faces in holes scraped in the earth, and when the men from Hanga Piko entered, they arose and slew the whole hundred. 575 A more interesting fact came out incidentally in connection with this gang of Toa-toa, connecting them with the secret societies found elsewhere in the Pacific. They were, it was said, in the habit of going about after dark with their faces painted red, white, and black, and visiting houses, where they declared they were gods, and demanded food, which the inhabitants accordingly gave them. The fraud, however, finally came to light when one day a man, who was travelling with his servant, saw them washing paint off their faces, "so they knew that they had deceived the people, and the people gathered together and killed them."

727 In these internecine fights fire was very generally set to the enemy's dwellings. ("He often burnt houses," a young man said, pointing to an older one, and the impeachment was not denied.) The ahu, too, were raided and bodies burnt, which 764 seems to be the cause of the burnt bones recorded by certain travellers; there is no reason to suppose there was cremation or sacrifice on Easter Island.

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



266 172 in the luncheon-basket, and, sitting down on a rock, asked to be told the story of the cave. "That," my attendants replied, "is Ko Tori." He was, they said, the last man on the island who had eaten human flesh. In this hiding-place he had enjoyed his meals, and no one had ever been able to track him. There had formerly been a cooking-place, but it was now hidden by a fall of stones. He had died as a very old man at the other end of the island, apparently in the odour of sanctity; to judge by the toothless jaw if he had not deserted his sins they must long ago have deserted him. His last desire was to be buried in the place with which he had such pleasant connections, and in dutiful regard to his wishes, or because it was feared that his ghost might otherwise make itself unpleasant, some of the young men bore the corpse on stretchers along the south coast and up to the top of the mountain, depositing it here. The next thing was to get at some sort of date; chronology is naturally of a vague order, and the most effective method is, if possible, to connect events with the generation in which they happened. "Did your grandfather know him," was asked, "or your father?" The answer was unexpected. "Porotu," they said, pointing to one of the old men, "helped to carry him," and silence fell on the group. My heart sank; I had then undone this last pious work and committed sacrilege. To my great relief, however, strange sounds soon made it clear that the humorous side had appealed to the escort; they were suffocating with mirth. "And now," they said, gasping between sobs of laughter, "Ko Tori goes in a basket to England." As I write, Ko Tori resides at the Royal College of Surgeons, and has done his bit towards elucidating the mystery of Easter Island.

894 581 595 611 764 Sexual morality, as known to us, was not a strong point in life on the island, but marriage was distinctly recognised, and the absolute loose liver was a person apart. Polygamy was usual, but many seem to have had only one wife. The children belonged to the father's clan, and are often distinguished by his name being given after their own. At the same time the clan of the mother was not ignored, and a man would sometimes fight for his maternal side. If a man had sons by more than one wife, after his death each claimed the body of his father to lie on the ahu of his mother's clan, and the corpse might thus be carried to several in turn, finally returning to its own destination.

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



the projecting noses, excavated on the south-eastern slope of Raraku (fig. 73) and, when she wanted water, rather than cross the boundary and go round to the lake by the gap, through the hostile dwellers on the western side, she used to clamber with her vessel up the boundary rift in the cliff face. There was one white child, who died young, but her marriage was not a success, and Viriamo left the man and went off to live with one of the Miru clan at Anakena. His house already contained a wife and family, also four brothers, but they all got on quite happily together. She had five children by this man, who, like their father, were all white; four of them, however, died in infancy. This was the result of the parents having most unfortunately fallen foul of an old man, whose cloak had been taken without his consent, and who had accordingly prophesied disaster. The remaining child, a daughter, was living and unmarried when we were on the island. The last husband was the most satisfactory of the three; he was a Tupahotu living near Tongariki. She was handed over to him as a matter of family arrangement, in discharge of a debt, but she was quite amenable to the exchange, and was very fond of him. He was light in colour, but her only child by this marriage, our friend Juan, was dark, taking, as he said, "after my mam-ma."

The women do not seem, judging by existing remains, to have had always a happy time. Dr. Keith, who examined the skulls collected by the Expedition, concludes his report on one of the female specimens as follows: "The most likely explanation is that the indent of the left temple was the cause of death, produced by the blow of a club, and that the suppuration and repair of the right side has been also produced by a former blow which failed to prove fatal. Two other skulls, also those of women, show indented fractures in the left temporal region."

Any deficiency at marriages, in the way of social festivity, was made up at funerals. These were attended by persons from all over the island, for "when they were not fighting, they were all cousins." In answer to the remark that "considering the population their whole time must have gone in this way," it was cheerfully observed that "they had nothing else to do, so they all went, everybody took food and everybody ate." The parents of one of our friends, Kapiera, lived at Anakena, but he was born on the south side of the island near Vaihu "when his

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

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FIG. 93.

AHU, HANGA MATHTKO

Old Image Ahu, converted to semi-pyramid form, with paved approach; also two stones on which were exposed the corpses of slain men.

229]

[facing p. 229]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



mother went for a funeral." The men who knew the tablets went also and sang, but there seems to have been little or nothing in the way of rites. The missionaries were impressed with the fact that there was no ceremony of any kind at a burial.

Most elaborate spells were, however, performed in connection with a man who had been slain, known as "tangata ika," or fish-man; the corpse was kept from resting either day or night while his neighbours went in pursuit of vengeance. In front of one ahu, on the north coast, some pieces of the old statues have been formed into a rude chair. On this, it was said, had been seated the naked body of a man belonging to the district, Kota-vari-vari by name, who had been killed at Akahanga on the south coast. One man kept the corpse from falling, while two others sat behind and chanted songs to aid the avengers. These watchers were covered with black ashes, wore only feather hats, and carried the small dancing-paddle known as "rapa" (fig. 116); the chief man in charge of the ceremony was known as the "timo." It must have been an eerie scene as dusk came on. The story is told of a murder near Tongariki. In this case the victim's corpse was placed on the ahu and turned over at intervals by the watchers. Hanga Maihiko, a converted image ahu on the south coast, is one of those which have a paved approach, and there are on the pavement two stones—pieces of a hat and a statue—specially used for exposing "fish-men" (fig. 93). If these charms failed to act, there was a still more reliable way. The clothes of the victim were buried beneath the cooking-place of the foe, and when he had partaken of food prepared there he would certainly die the night following. Some of the carved tablets were connected with these rites; one was certainly known as that of the "Ika," while there is said to have been another called "Timo," which was the "list" kept by each ahu of its murdered men.

The custom of exposing the dead was, as has been stated, going on in living memory. The information already given on this head is confirmed by the accounts of the missionaries,[1] but

[1] "These bodies, enveloped in mats, are placed on a heap of stones or on a kind of wooden structure, the head being turned towards the sea. Now, as all the population live round the island, dried skeletons are to be met all along this coast, and no one seems to take any notice of them."—Letter from Brother Eyraud—*Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, Jan. 1866.

151 Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



764 burial was also practised, the mode of disposal being a matter of choice. There were two drawbacks to exposure: firstly, if the deceased was for any reason an uncanny person, his ghost might make itself unpleasant—he was safer hidden under stones; secondly, the body, if left in the open, might be burnt by enemies; this latter was the reason given for the burial of the last great chief, Ngaara, who was interred in one of the image ahu on the western coast. Not only were the ruins of the greater ahu still being used, but up till 1863 smaller ones were being

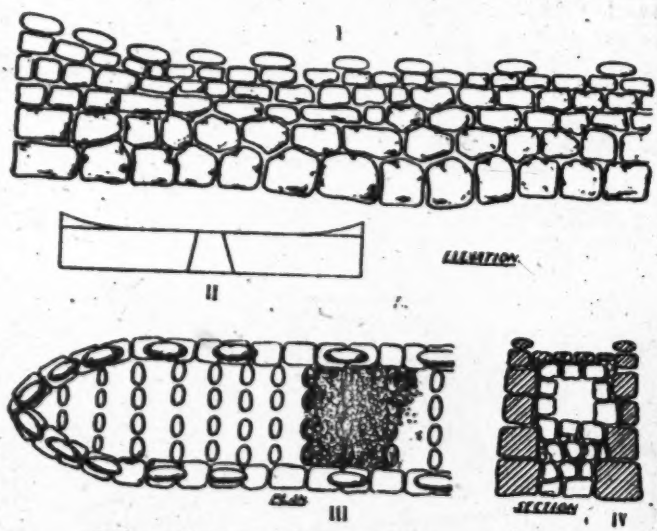


FIG. 94.—DIAGRAM OF AHU POE-POE (CANOE-SHAPE).

built. One was pointed out on the north coast as having been put up for an individual, the maternal aunt of our guide, the lady having had the misfortune to be killed by a devil in the night. It was a small structure, ovoidal in shape, 10 feet in length, with a flat top sloping from a height of 9 feet at the end towards the sea, to 4 feet 6 inches at that towards the land; there was beneath it a vaulted chamber for bones.

Burial cairns, called "ahu poe-poe," were being made in modern times, and a man skilled in their construction was amongst those who were carried off to Peru. The word "poe-poe" is described

15;Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



The word "poe-poe" is described as meaning a big canoe, such as their ancestors came in to the island. It is applied to two types of ahu, one of which is obviously built to resemble a boat; of this kind there are about twelve in the island. One large one (fig. 94) measured as much as 178 feet in length, the width being 20 feet, while the ends, which are made like the bow and stern of a canoe, are about 10 feet to 15 feet in height. The flat top is paved with sea-boulders, and is surrounded by a row of the same in imitation of the gunwale of a boat. In one such ahu two vaults were found by us just below the surface with perfect burials. One was the body of an old man, the other of a woman with a child. Both had been wrapped in reeds, and with the body of the woman were some glass beads. On the surface of the ahu were a few bones, possibly of a body which had been exposed there, but the ahu had apparently been built for the two interments. It is less obvious why the same name, "ahu poe-poe," should be applied to a burial-place which was wedge-shaped in form. It follows the lines of the image ahu in so far as having a wall towards the sea flanked on the land sides by a slope of masonry. It might be held to represent the prow of a boat, but resembles rather a pier or jetty. Only some six of these were seen, of which the longest was 70 feet. One in a lonely spot, at the very edge of a high cliff, which overlooked Anakena Bay, formed a most striking abode for the dead (fig. 95).

In a few cases the term ahu is given to a pavement, generally by the roadside, neatly made of rounded boulders and edged with a curb; the form was said to be ancient. One of those on the west road was reported as specially dedicated to mata-toa—which signifies victors or warriors—and the same was said of a differently made ahu on the south coast.[1]

Neither exposure nor interment was necessarily confined to ahu, and corpses were frequently disposed of in caverns, as in the case of Ko Tori. Three instances were mentioned, an uncle and two nephews, where the corpses, after being exposed, were lowered with a rope down the crevasses of the cliff of Raraku

[1] When all those ahu which can be placed in categories as Image, Semi-Pyramid, Canoe, Wedge-shaped, or Pavement have been noted, there remain, out of the total of two hundred and sixty burial-places, some fourteen which are unique in design; and between sixty and seventy which cannot be classified, either because they are mere cairns or in too ruined a condition to be identified.

15:Routledge 'E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

764

FIG. 95.—AHU FOE-FOE (WEDGE SHAPE).



[facing p. 232]

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2



in order to evade the enemy. (One of the nephews, who had been of the party when the final statues were overthrown, had met with a tragic end, being drowned by catching his hand in a rock when diving for lobsters under water.) With the exception of those near the standing statues, we practically never found an earth burial. This seems to account for the exaggerated estimates of the number of human remains on the island; it is doubtful if even five hundred skulls could be collected, but, whether in caves or ruined ahu, a large proportion of those which exist are very much in evidence.

Memorials of the dead were erected in various places independently of the actual locality where the corpse rested. Some of these were simply mounds of earth, which can be seen on various hills; there is a regular succession on the landward rim of the Raraku crater, opposite to the great cliff, but one at least of these was a memorial to a man whose body had been disposed of in the clefts of the cliff. Others of these independent memorials were in the shape of cairns about 6 feet in height, known as "pipi-hereko," and were formerly surmounted by a white stone. Many of them still exist, and they are particularly numerous on the high ground above Anakena Cove. The locality was chosen as one which was but little inhabited, for the taboo for the dead (or pera) extended to them, and no one went near them in the daylight, on penalty of being stoned, till the period of mourning had been terminated with the usual feast. Various voyagers commented on these cairns, which were marked objects, and Cook thinks that they may have been put up instead of statues.

It would seem by the following tale, which imposes a somewhat severe strain on the European imagination, that piles of stones had in the native mind a certain resemblance to the human figure. "There was once an old lady who had an arm so long that it could have reached right across the island. She was a bad old woman, and once a month had a child to eat, so a certain man determined to put an end to her power for doing harm. He took her out in a boat to fish, first telling his small son to collect stones, and after they had gone to put them in piles in front of the house of the woman, and also to make a fire and much smoke. When the canoe had got out to sea, he looked back and found the boy had done as he was told, and glimpses of the cairns could be seen among the clouds of smoke. Then